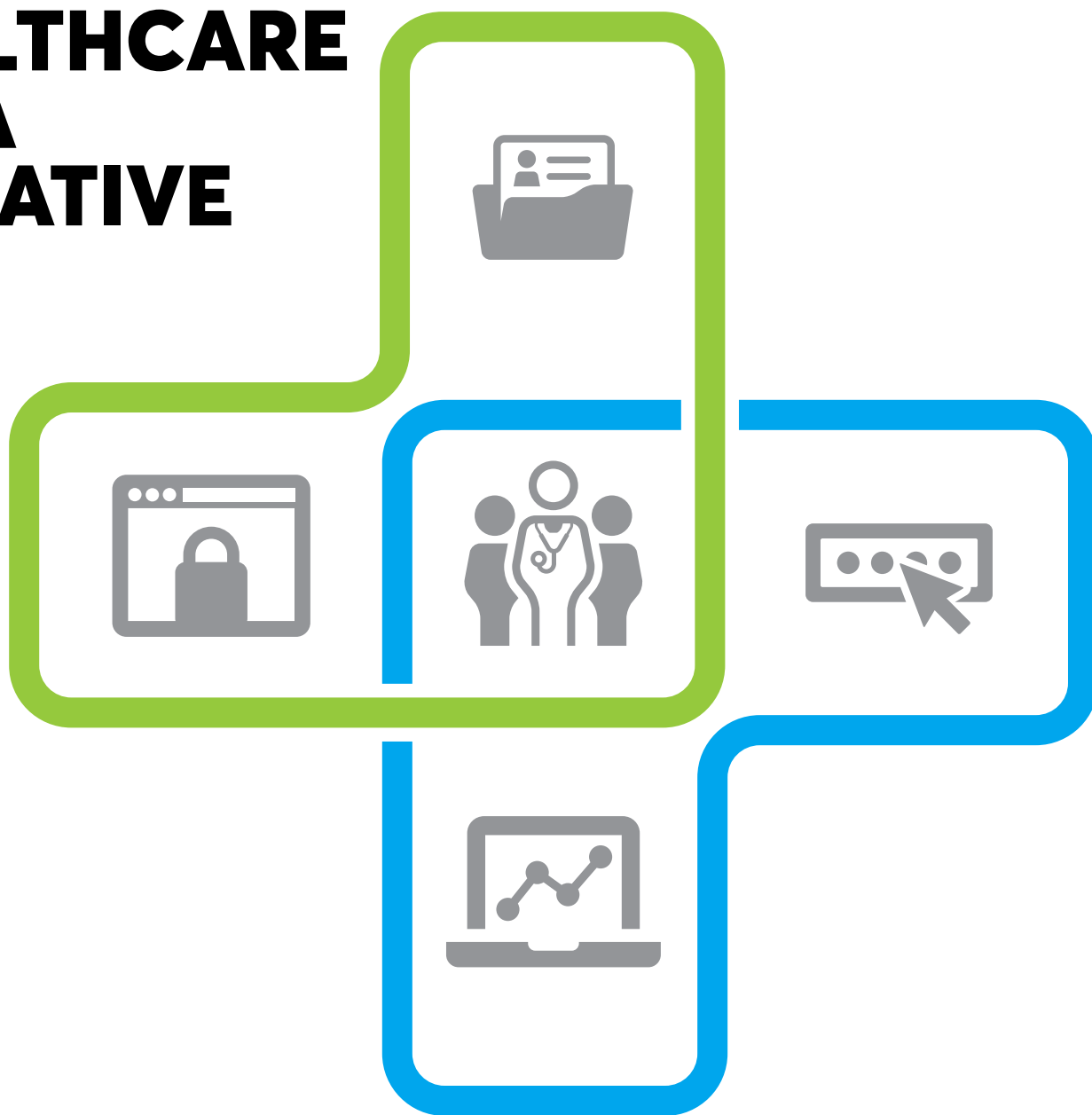




# THE MISSING PIECE IN YOUR HEALTHCARE DATA INITIATIVE



## **Data Citizen: If you use data to do your job, then you are a data citizen.**

*The highly regulated nature of healthcare data, combined with complex and interwoven workflows, makes data governance a “must-have” capability in healthcare organizations’ data-centric initiatives. Yet many of those projects fail to account for data governance from the start, resulting in increased risk and inefficiency, as well as missed opportunities to get the most from their healthcare data. Here’s why—and what you should do to change that.*

Healthcare data growth continues to surge, fueled by new devices, applications, and data sources. This has created a remarkable opportunity for healthcare organizations to capture, mine, extract, and analyze all that data to achieve such essential goals as improve health outcomes, enhance the patient experience, bolster financial results, and steer clear of regulatory and security problems.

As a result, data-centric initiatives are at the top of every healthcare executive’s to-do list. And population health, analytics, quality improvement, value-based payments, big data, electronic medical records (EMRs), master data management (MDM), data warehousing, and business intelligence (BI) all have moved to the forefront of strategic projects designed to leverage all that data. Take just one example: big data. Research indicates that the healthcare big data market will continue to grow at double-digit rates through the end of the decade, with 2019 big data expenditures 42% higher than spending just four years earlier.<sup>1</sup>

But there’s a stark reality most healthcare organizations have yet to fully confront with their projects, a majority of which are data driven. For the most part, projects such as big data, MDM, BI, and others have been implemented with little or no attention to data governance from the beginning. While some progressive healthcare CIOs and their business executive colleagues have embraced data governance from the start of their projects, all too often projects have treated data governance as an afterthought. Or worse, ignored it completely.

There are many reasons why data governance needs to be baked into data-based initiatives from the onset. Compliance immediately comes to mind: Regulations such as HIPAA, Meaningful Use, MACRA, and others all require full communication and tight collaboration across business units in order to ensure that data is being used in accordance with regulatory constraints.

At the same time, data governance’s role in fostering greater collaboration and partnership between IT and business stakeholders is essential for using data in ways that breed efficiency in highlighting a 360-degree view of data that can be fully leveraged by “data citizens.” Without a broad, accurate, timely, and trustworthy accounting for all data—across all devices, applications, and sources—practitioners, technicians, financial executives, and administrators are likely to miss opportunities.

Some visionary healthcare organizations have even begun to think about establishing data governance programs that span multiple data-centric projects, in hopes of extending data governance across the enterprise and dealing with operational and change governance that isn’t always tied to a specific project. That is a laudable goal, but in order to get to that point, the healthcare industry needs to ensure that data governance is integrated into individual initiatives from the start. And, if those projects are already underway without the proper attention to data governance, healthcare executives need to change that—fast.

### **Why starting with data governance is necessary**

One of the most basic—and most important—reasons why designing data governance into your project from the start is the reality that “things change.” Economic climates shift, new

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.technavio.com/report/global-big-data-spending-in-healthcare-industry-market-research-2015-2019>

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markets are entered, compliance mandates morph and multiply, and workflows—especially in healthcare—evolve. Consider, for instance, the impact of a single healthcare requirement such as adopting a new clinical documentation code on how healthcare data is used and managed.

Without data governance at the beginning of your initiative, many of your initial assumptions about how your most essential data is captured, analyzed, reported, and acted on are likely to be obsolete and incomplete. They may even cause big legal and regulatory problems if changes are made without a full understanding of impacts resulting from that change.

Failure to design and integrate data governance at the beginning means that the organization runs the very real risk of having strong technology foundations without the proper processes for implementing business changes in the treatment of data over time. For instance, patient care improvements are happening all the time in healthcare; best practices for everything from eliminating infection risks to improving venipuncture success rates are always changing. As the medical knowledge around those and other procedures evolve, so must workflows and business processes that use healthcare data.

Another key source of change in healthcare data is the rapidly changing business model for hospitals and accountable care organizations. The dramatic increase in hospital system mergers and acquisitions is an important example of the changing competitive landscape. And the recent trends toward incorporating private physician practices and opening up community-based emergency care facilities are further examples of how healthcare data usage and management has had to change. Not to mention a seemingly never-ending change to reimbursement models and explosion of “shared-risk” contracts.

Without a strong data governance base, these changes cause healthcare enterprises to miss opportunities to use their data in new ways to tackle a variety of clinical, operational, financial, and regulatory challenges. In use cases such as MDM, big data, EMR and analytics, failure to incorporate data governance means that data citizens, including executive data citizens, will lack the necessary levels of confidence in the accuracy, timeliness, relevance, and context of the data to make essential decisions.

Finally, keep in mind that just because your healthcare data initiative already is underway, that doesn't mean you shouldn't look to incorporate sound data governance principles and practices into your systems. It's never too late to put in place the steps necessary to help healthcare organizations anticipate and adapt to change over time.

Bottom line: Without data governance baked into your initiatives from the start, change management—a must-have requirement in fast-moving, highly regulated markets like healthcare—will be much, much harder. Without it, healthcare organizations struggle to properly map, define, and approve critical elements such as responsibilities, data usage, and authoritative sources. And it isn't just making your job more difficult; it is putting your organization's precious capital dollars, your project success, and potentially you and your team's careers at risk.

## **HOW SCALABILITY IS TIED TO IT/BUSINESS STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION**

The ability to scale any initiative from a single, narrow application for a particular user constituency to one that can be applied to multiple initiatives across the healthcare enterprise is something that appeals to healthcare CIOs, business leaders, CFOs, and data citizens of all types. But accomplishing that scalability goal requires a commitment to open, constant collaboration among IT and business colleagues, the project management skills to make it possible, and great tools to facilitate the process.

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To make this happen, all healthcare constituents need to understand that data governance is not an IT function—at least, not only for the IT organization. While it is widely understood that data initiatives have historically been the domain of the healthcare IT organization, the many changes facing the healthcare industry means that IT must engage business stakeholders from the start. And, unfortunately, not every IT organization has made that mindset shift yet.

In use cases such as quality of care, value-based compensation, care coordination, risk management, and competitive strategies, healthcare IT and business leaders need to work together to define the very nature of data governance for each initiative. They also must look for ways to extend the processes and benefits of data governance on an initiative-by-initiative basis to one that spans use cases that intersect with each other in the use of healthcare data.

In this day and age, it may sound strange to talk about the need for IT and business teams to collaborate in data-based initiatives. After all, it would seem natural that IT executives wouldn't plow ahead on projects like EMR, big data, MDM, and other data-centric programs without input and deep involvement from business teams.

Engaging the business can sound like project management 101. But engaging the business means a lot more than just inviting them to the kickoff meeting or key demos. Engaging the business means understanding who is really responsible, relinquishing some control and decision-making authority, providing information needed for business users to make critical decisions, and acknowledging limits in IT expertise. It's also about consulting with the real business experts – your business users - and keeping everyone accountable for their decisions. This starts with documenting those discussions and the process to reach a decision. In fact, it's a bit like a responsibility assignment, or RACI matrix.

But many healthcare IT decision-makers don't take the time to educate business stakeholders on what data governance can mean for successful data initiatives, especially with the ever-increasing workloads of non-technical users. This historical hurdle must be overcome, however. By focusing on essential requirements on how data will be captured, analyzed, reported, and shared now and, especially in the future, healthcare organizations make data governance an integrated, intuitive, and native part of their data initiatives.

By breaking down departmental barriers and driving collaboration across the organization, healthcare enterprises can use data governance principles to promote collaboration, achieve common business goals, ensure long-term regulatory compliance, and protect data and privacy no matter where inside or outside the organization the data resides.

While enterprise-wide data governance may not be the best initial goal for all healthcare organizations, it certainly is something those organizations will want to move toward in order to improve efficiencies and enhance their long-term competitive stance.

## **WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A HEALTHCARE DATA GOVERNANCE SOLUTION**

Healthcare data governance success often centers on three key issues: Purpose-built solutions, enterprise-wide scalability, and designed-in engineering. Successful healthcare data initiatives account for these issues when they envision their current and long-term solutions.

To properly address those issues, healthcare architects and project sponsors need to seek out, evaluate, and implement data governance platforms that proactively implement sustainable, automated workflow processes, instead of simply reacting to process changes when they occur. This requires going beyond the boundaries of traditional MDM, data warehousing, or BI systems that often “bolt on” data governance as a secondary capability or provide “lip service” to governance capabilities in another software module to complete the MDM, BI tool, or data

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warehouse sale. This is essential for adoption of data governance capabilities to support your data-centric project and mandatory if the organization hopes to build a foundation for more enterprise governance down the road.

At the heart of the ideal healthcare data governance solution is an integrated data catalog. This acts as a single, trusted source of intelligence for data citizens and technical experts alike to gain quick access to enterprise data. Your data catalog needs to be able to tag, document, and annotate data sets, which supports continuous enrichment of data assets and helps break down data silos. The best data catalog will provide a rich, evolving, and context-specific glossary that will provide commonly accepted definitions on key elements of your healthcare data. It also will enable the flexibility to incorporate other business and technical metadata related to your data initiative, such as lineage/traceability, business rules, organizational responsibilities, and related policies as a start.

Here are some specific questions you'll want to answer concerning your healthcare data governance platform:

- Is the catalog truly integrated into the data governance platform, rather than a stand-alone solution added to the platform?
- How are changes in workflows and business processes incorporated into the data catalog? Can those workflows be automated when and where needed?
- Can your data governance platform scale beyond your initial solution such as MDM, data warehousing, or care coordination as organizational needs change?
- How are risk management issues accounted for in the platform and the catalog, such as compliance, security, and other legal exposures?
- Is input from business stakeholders a priority and embraced on an ongoing basis, with ease of use a top requirement?

## **HOW COLLIBRA SOLUTIONS ADDRESS THESE NEEDS**

The Collibra Data Governance Center is designed to help healthcare IT leaders, business executives, clinicians, and data citizens build and sustain a common foundation for data governance. The platform provides critical business and technical context on healthcare data from a wide array of data sources, both third-party applications and those built in-house.

It provides a highly automated approach to security and governance policies to meet a wide range of compliance, legal, and privacy mandates. It also is a purpose-built solution that offers enterprise scalability by recognizing context for data, thus improving both data comprehension and user confidence.

Collibra Data Governance Center is extended and enhanced by Collibra Catalog—a single source of insight for analysts, data scientists, and non-technical data citizens who need quick, accurate, timely, and contextually rich views of healthcare data.

Collibra Catalog allows users to shop for data they need, ensuring confidence in finding the right data because it offers the context to the data by linking business terms of its glossary to registered tables and columns based on the organization's own vocabulary.

Semantic search allows Collibra Catalog data citizens to perform real-language searches using familiar business and organizational terminology in order to recognize intent of the request. This results in more complete, meaningful, and insightful findings. It also provides healthcare data citizens with context-specific recommendations to help them uncover information they need from a wide range of sources.

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## **CONCLUSION**

As data-centric initiatives continue to proliferate, healthcare organizations are under more pressure to realize value from these investments and enable new data-driven decision capabilities. Although many healthcare organizations acknowledge the importance of data governance, not all of them have taken the essential step of incorporating relevant data governance into their programs from the start.

Rather than bolting on data governance as an afterthought, healthcare executives need to apply and practice data governance in their project's initial design, development, and deployment plans with a priority on supporting business engagement on responsibility, accountability, consultation, and with necessary information. And, this needs to be envisioned not only for individual projects, but also for a wide swath of initiatives that touch healthcare data throughout the enterprise.

Forward-thinking healthcare organizations are turning to solutions like Collibra Data Governance Center from the start in order to put the right data into the hands of data citizens—business stakeholders who need to trust the accuracy, relevance, and timeliness of healthcare data for clinical, operational, compliance, and financial requirements. Additionally, solutions like Collibra Catalog further facilitate data governance best practices to creating a common language and framework for users ranging from tech-savvy business intelligence architects to self-service data users who need to shop for data they need quickly and confidently.

For more information on how to make data governance a core element to your most vital healthcare data initiatives, please visit [www.collibra.com/healthcare](http://www.collibra.com/healthcare).