



Closing the AI governance gap: Building a strong foundation for success

Artificial intelligence (AI) offers exciting opportunities for healthcare to improve efficiency, patient outcomes, and decision-making. However, successful AI implementation depends on strong technical infrastructure, effective data management, and strategic governance.

To better understand organizational readiness to manage and scale AI applications across the healthcare enterprise, Nordic, a leader in health IT modernization, partnered with Modern Healthcare Content Studio to survey healthcare executives. The findings provide valuable insights into the state of foundational preparations for AI and organizational priorities.

From mid-January to mid-February 2025, 127 responses were gathered. The respondents represent a diverse range of organizations: 40% from health systems, 24% from hospitals, 13% from medical clinics or groups, and 23% from other healthcare-related fields.

The majority of respondents (63%) hold director-level or higher leadership roles, including almost a quarter at the C-suite level (22%). This executive perspective is critical as the survey data reflects enterprise-wide strategic priorities in AI adoption across healthcare organizations.

Overall, the survey reveals opportunities for improvement in technology infrastructure and data scalability. Healthcare organizations

must take a step back to reassess their foundational strategies before embarking on AI initiatives with expectations to scale innovation. Additionally, high confidence levels in AI readiness do not translate to established AI governance, a disconnect that is important for leaders to recognize. This executive brief explores these key findings and their implications for healthcare leaders.

Addressing room for growth in AI scalability

While many organizations believe they have the necessary technical infrastructure to support AI, the reality is that most still require significant improvements to scale effectively. Notably, 71% of respondents reported having at least some AI infrastructure in place, but more than half (52%) acknowledged that their systems need further development or expansion. Only a fraction - 15% - consider their infrastructure easily scalable, indicating that a large majority of organizations may face barriers when attempting to expand AI-driven initiatives.

Just 15% of respondents said their organization's current IT infrastructure is "very well" equipped to "easily scale with AI needs."

Among the most pressing infrastructure challenges, data integration and interoperability (51%) stand out as a top priority, followed closely by data analytics tools (50%) and data security (37%). The need for seamless interoperability between disparate systems remains a critical factor in AI scalability, as siloed or incomplete data can hinder AI's effectiveness in improving clinical and operational workflows.

Top barriers to AI scalability

Data integration & interoperability | 51%

Data analytics tools | 50%

Data security | 37%

Percentages do not total 100% as respondents could select multiple barriers. Only the top barriers are shown.

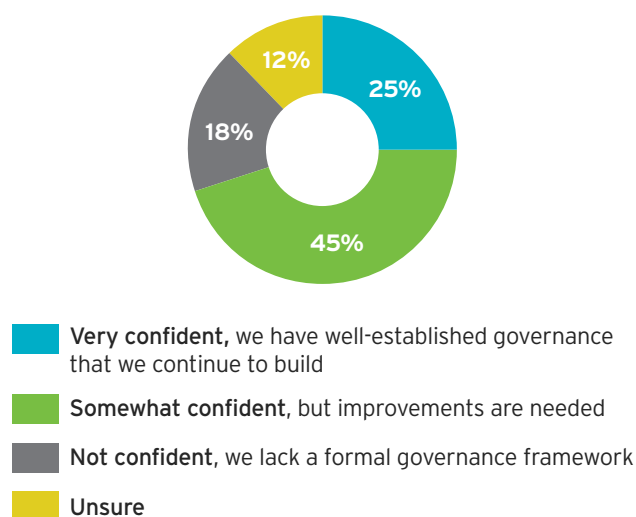
A key takeaway from these results is that many organizations implement new technologies without a cohesive strategy, forcing teams to adapt their workflows around the technology rather than leveraging it as a tool for operational enhancement.

To maximize AI's potential, healthcare leaders must take a proactive approach, learning from past challenges to build a resilient, scalable infrastructure that supports innovation rather than impedes it. This requires not only financial investment but also long-term strategic planning to ensure AI solutions integrate seamlessly with existing healthcare systems.

Governance gaps: Confidence vs. reality

Many organizations express confidence in their AI governance, yet relatively few have well-defined governance structures to support responsible AI implementation. This is revealed in the fact that 70% of respondents stated they feel at least somewhat confident in their cross-institutional governance frameworks, but only 25% actually have "well-established governance" in place. The disparity suggests that while healthcare executives recognize the importance of AI governance, many are still in the early stages of developing the necessary policies and oversight mechanisms.

Confidence in AI governance



While more than half of healthcare organizations (56%) claim to have a dedicated AI team, the robustness and effectiveness of these teams remain unclear. One-third of respondents said their team focused on AI-related projects or technologies also has responsibility for multiple other technologies. Moreover, 19% simply do not have any specific AI committee or board.

These findings raise numerous questions. What defines a team? How many members should be involved, and should their sole focus be evaluating AI initiatives? Without clear roles and responsibilities, AI teams may lack the expertise and authority to make meaningful contributions.

AI governance is a critical gap, presenting an opportunity for organizations to establish clearer methodologies for implementation, strategic alignment with organizational goals, and ongoing evaluation of AI's effectiveness.

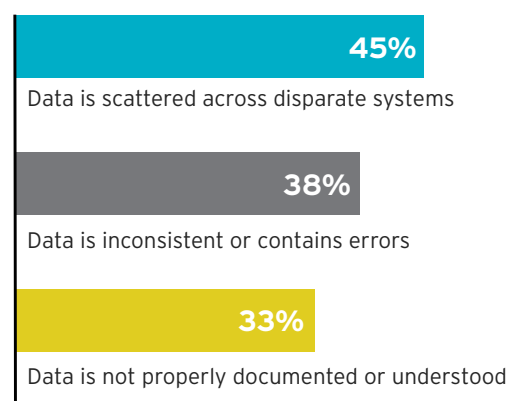
AI expertise: Ensuring AI lives up to its promise

Beyond governance, another major challenge in AI implementation is ensuring that organizations have the right expertise to evaluate and deploy AI solutions effectively. AI is evolving rapidly, and without a well-trained workforce, healthcare leaders might struggle to differentiate between AI that delivers real value and AI that is merely hype.

The survey findings indicate that AI training is still not a priority for most organizations. Only 6% of respondents report having extensive AI training programs in place, while 47% are just beginning to prioritize training efforts. For 35% of respondents, AI training is not currently a priority but plans to address it are on the horizon.

This lack of education and expertise presents a significant risk: without knowledgeable staff to vet AI vendors and solutions, organizations could invest in technologies that fail to deliver on their promises.

Top data readiness challenges



Percentages do not total 100% as respondents could select multiple barriers. Only the top barriers are shown.

At the same time, organizations are heavily relying on internal resources such as IT departments and clinical staff (79%) for guidance and expertise in implementing AI solutions. With the ability to select multiple options, reliance on internal resources far exceeded the 45% that rely on technology vendors; 41% on government agencies and academic institutions; 36% on external consultants; and 27% on professional organizations.

Given the important role of internal resources, AI expertise must extend beyond IT departments. Clinicians, administrators, and decision-makers should receive training to understand how AI can be leveraged responsibly and effectively, making organizations better positioned to integrate AI in a way that aligns with their operational and clinical objectives.

Expert guidance from Nordic

As healthcare organizations navigate the complexities of AI adoption, having the right guidance is essential. Nordic is a strategic end-to-end health IT partner dedicated to helping healthcare organizations thrive in their digital transformation journey. With 15 years of deep industry expertise, Nordic empowers innovative initiatives like AI through strategy and delivery across IT modernization. AI is not a one-size-fits-all solution, and organizations must take a tailored approach to adoption. Whether addressing infrastructure challenges, governance gaps, or workforce readiness, Nordic provides the insights and tools necessary to drive successful AI initiatives. ■

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About the survey

Modern Healthcare Content Studio, on behalf of Nordic, commissioned Signet Research, Inc., an independent company, to survey healthcare professionals. The objective of this study was to learn about organizations' readiness to implement and scale AI, including their infrastructure capabilities and governance frameworks.

On January 21, 2025, Modern Healthcare Content Studio sent an email to a select group of Modern Healthcare subscribers asking them to participate in a survey. Subsequent reminder emails were sent from January 29 to February 11 to encourage responses. By the closing date of February 14, 2025, 127 returns had been received. The base used for each question is total answering. Survey findings may be considered accurate to a 95% confidence level, within a sampling tolerance of approximately +/- 8.7%.