

HIT Think Why providers will focus attention on these big data basics in 2017

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In 2016, initiatives such as population health management and value-based care took form, with a particular emphasis on data analytics capabilities.

However, many organizations are struggling to leverage analytics tools to their full capacity. According to a recent KPMG study, 60 percent of organizations are not confident in their data and analytics insights, and only 10 percent feel that they excel in managing the quality of data and analytics. To change the paradigm of data analytics in healthcare, the healthcare IT sector needs to continue to build out the technology and competencies necessary for managing increasing volumes of data.

If we want to start seeing the full value of data analytics in 2017, the healthcare IT industry should focus on the following three tasks.

Build a strong data foundation. Adopting a “back to basics” mentality will help to leverage business intelligence and data analytics in the New Year. Moreover, a strong data foundation lays the framework for more complex applications to work properly. In 2017, healthcare entities will continue to implement robust data pipelines in an effort to improve the effectiveness of their analytics infrastructure. Therefore, it is essential that the foundation for these applications is sound before moving ahead with more intricate technologies.

The role of data analytics in population health initiatives is an example of the importance of a strong data foundation. Not only does it take a disciplined approach to managing patient-related data, but a strong base also lays the

groundwork for the success of care coordination initiatives, thus allowing more complex applications to be added over time.

Get data to the front lines. Although healthcare organizations are not suffering from a lack of information, they are overwhelmed by the excessive amount of data that continues to accumulate. Because of this, many are finding it challenging to identify the most pertinent information in a timely manner. In 2017, healthcare organizations will focus on moving the most useful subsets of information to the front lines where it is most valuable. Through the use of analytics and business intelligence tools, healthcare organizations can better utilize data by making it more accessible to front line and back office staff who need it to make better informed decisions.

Additionally, datasets that are subject-focused and fine-tuned to solve specific problems will become increasingly available. Integrating metadata directly into these data sets will help make them more useful to less technical information consumers. This is especially true when it comes to data sets involving chronic conditions, such as diabetes, because much of the opportunity to improve healthcare lies in managing and preventing such diseases. When this data is at the forefront of care delivery, healthcare organizations can identify areas for improvement across entire populations and detect potential opportunities for enhanced education.

Focus on actionable data measurements. Healthcare organizations will become increasingly adept at leveraging data to gain more valuable and actionable insights. These insights will help to improve patient care, lower hospital costs and improve operational efficiencies. But attaining those actionable insights can be challenging.

The healthcare IT industry will make progress in addressing this problem by incorporating more relevant and actionable measurements in 2017. This includes everything from understanding how timely data insights on the front lines of healthcare translate to improved patient outcomes as well as how measuring the organization's care quality performance will impact revenue cycles. For this to be effective, detailed comparisons within and across organizations will be necessary. This requires appropriate, actionable measurements as well as practical approaches to performance attribution.

These three trends will play a significant role in the continued success of major healthcare IT initiatives. As the New Year approaches, the healthcare IT industry

should consider these data priorities as they review existing data initiatives. In doing so, healthcare organizations will succeed in emerging care delivery and payment model initiatives, such as value-based care and risk-based contracts, that continue to top the list for major priorities in the New Year.

By shifting the focus back to the basics of big data and analytics, organizations will be able to thrive in 2017 and beyond.