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Unlocking high performance: The key role of data for healthcare

Data is the key to unlocking high performance for hospitals and health systems. It provides the foundation for informed decision-making, change management and performance monitoring. It is only through reliable and transparent data that hospitals can identify areas for improvement and track progress.

In this Q&A, David Levine, MD, discusses the challenges facing healthcare leaders in developing data strategies that enhance care delivery and patient access. Dr. Levine currently serves as the chief medical officer for Vizient®; he was formerly the group senior vice president of advanced analytics & data science healthcare.

David Levine
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Why is data important for unlocking high performance in hospitals and health systems?

Healthcare leaders want to drive meaningful change and track performance like never before. To do this, they need reliable and transparent data that can be drilled down to the patient, provider or unit level. Data must be timely and risk-adjusted. Top-performing organizations understand that data isn't perfect, but it should be close to perfect with benchmarked groups for accurate comparisons.

What data strategies are healthcare leaders developing for better care delivery and patient access?

Leaders are focusing on a "north star" to sustain top performance. This north star should align with patient care priorities and allow for comparisons with similar institutions. It's important to include all patients in the data, regardless of payer status. They should use data consistently to drive change, involving stakeholders such as physicians in goal setting and reviews. Units and departments, down to the individual employee, should understand how their performance contributes to goals.

What challenges can data help solve, and what innovations are you excited about?

Data can help solve challenges in clinical and non-clinical workflows. Artificial intelligence (AI) is already being used in human resources functions, call center assistance and coding for claims. AI supports radiologists in reading images improving their accuracy and efficiency.

In the future, AI can provide better decision support for complex medical care, early detection systems and personalized medicine. However, there's still much work to be done before we see the full potential of AI in healthcare. Things are moving fast, but there is a lot to be done before we see the full potential.

What are healthcare leaders investing in today to be successful in the future?

Leaders are investing in data warehousing and visualization, as well as AI for back-office operations. They are enhancing coding and documentation and optimizing workflows in operating rooms and emergency departments. In the short term, the focus is on charge capture and reconciliation, analyzing patient data and workflow optimization. In the long term, priorities include predictive analytics, risk stratification, clinical decision support tools and provider workflow solutions.

How is Vizient partnering with leaders to achieve shared goals?

Vizient works closely with healthcare leaders to set data-driven goals based on benchmarks from other organizations who also work with us. When best practices are unclear, Vizient conducts benchmarking studies to better understand the issues and develop solutions. We continue to invest in our integrated data platform and AI to provide insights that help hospitals lower costs, improve quality and grow strategically.

The goal is to identify the best quality care delivered at the best cost for each patient. We are helping healthcare organizations focus their work strategically on investing in data that sets them up for success in a rapidly changing landscape. We all share in the goal to improve patient care and reduce complexity in our healthcare system.

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