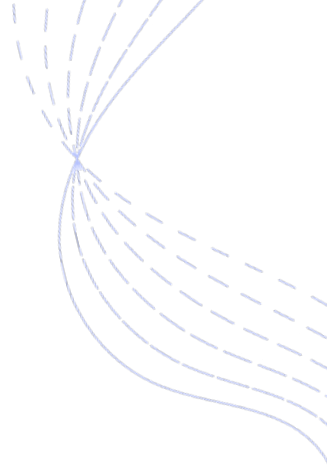## SIGNAL 1

Governance as a Growth Lever: How Guardrails Unlock AI Value

Why healthcare systems must stop viewing oversight as a barrier—and start seeing it as a catalyst for AI-driven results

Introduction:
Rethinking the Role of Governance in AI

In healthcare, governance and guardrails aren't dirty words. They are foundational—woven into virtually all aspects of clinical, operational, and regulatory decision-making. But when it comes to AI, governance is too often viewed as a drag on progress. It's perceived as something that slows down innovation, introduces undue process and overhead, or adds hurdles to getting promising solutions into the hands of clinical, operational, and administrative teams.

That mindset needs to change.

"Innovation moves at the speed of governance. Too often, governance is treated as a cost of doing business—something you invest in because you have to. But the reality is, strong governance is what allows you to move faster with confidence. It's the difference between pilots that stall and AI that scales."

Brian Anderson, Co-Founder and CEO, CHAI

Governance, when done right, is not a bottleneck—it's a growth lever. The right guardrails don't restrict progress; they accelerate it. By creating clear structure around intake, validation, and performance monitoring, an effective governance framework removes uncertainty, builds trust, and enables faster, more confident decision-making about where and how to scale AI.

And scale is the imperative. AI has the potential to unlock **$200 to $300 billion in annual value** across U.S. healthcare—from better clinical outcomes to operational efficiency to reduced waste. But today, **only 15% of that value is being realized.** The limiting factor isn't innovation—it's the lack of centralized infrastructure to evaluate, prioritize, and manage AI across the full lifecycle and enterprise.

That's where governance comes in—not just oversight, but as a strategic enabler of speed, safety, and system-wide impact.

The AI Adoption Gap in Healthcare

Today's health systems are under mounting pressure to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and elevate patient access and care. AI holds promise in all these areas, yet most initiatives never make it past the pilot stage. In fact:

60-80%

of healthcare AI projects remain in pilot mode or never reach full deployment.

Why? It's not for lack of potential. Many of these models have already demonstrated value. But organizations are missing the infrastructure to validate them at scale, track performance, and align adoption and workflows with enterprise-wide goals. A critical gap is the lack of process metrics— leading indicators like utilization, workflow integration, and stakeholder engagement—that signal whether adoption is on track. Without measuring and managing these drivers, health systems can't identify and address barriers early, and even validated tools can stall before delivering their full impact.

Without proper governance processes and tools, health systems are left with:

- **A proliferation of pilots** with no enterprise-wide AI strategy
- **Unclear and distributed ownership** of AI projects
- **Limited visibility** into performance, risk and ROI
- **Duplicate efforts** across departments or sites
- **Delayed decisions** due to lack of trust or standards

The result? A growing inventory of AI tools stuck in limbo—approved but not deployed, deployed but not measured. Without governance before and after deployment, health systems miss the chance to prioritize high-impact solutions, track their real-world performance, and course-correct when value falls short. The opportunity cost of inaction rises, while leadership is left questioning the return on all of their AI investment dollars.

Governance Done Right:
A Framework for Acceleration

Governance isn't about slowing things down. It's about making better decisions—faster and with confidence. When designed as an enabler, governance introduces the structure needed to deploy AI safely and at scale.

Organizations with mature governance, AI governance, are about **2.3 times more likely** to scale AI and deploy successful AI initiatives.

Organizations with mature AI governance are more likely to scale AI - Sutter Health CDAO. CDO Magazine. (2025, June 18). https://www.cdomagazine.tech/aiml/organizations-with-mature-ai-governance-are-more-likely-to-scale-ai-sutter-health-cdao.

Here's how:

1. Structured Intake: Prioritize What Matters

A centralized intake process ensures AI proposals are evaluated based on alignment with enterprise goals, ROI potential, and operational readiness. This avoids ad hoc deployment and ensures resources go to the highest-impact projects.

What structured intake provides:

- Visibility into all AI proposals across departments or sites

- A consistent framework to evaluate strategic alignment and ROI potential

- Early elimination of duplicative or low-value efforts

Focus investment on tools that drive margin, quality, or throughput

Eliminate duplicative or misaligned efforts early

2. Validation & Approval: Build Confidence Through Evidence

Governance sets consistent criteria for determining whether AI tools are truly ready for deployment. Crucially, this includes **validating models against the hospital's own data and workflows**—not just vendor test sets or results from other institutions. This ensures the tool performs safely and effectively in your unique clinical and operational context, addressing criteria such as:

- Clinical safety and reliability
- Operational feasibility and workflow fit
- Risk mitigation and equity considerations
- Integration with existing systems

Standardized rubrics and risk management frameworks reduce uncertainty and build trust

Stakeholders can greenlight projects based on data from their own environment, not external assumptions

3. Performance Monitoring: Real-Time Visibility Into Safety, Accuracy, and Impact

Governance doesn't end at deployment. AI tools must be **continuously monitored** to ensure they remain safe, accurate, and valuable in real-world use. Yet many health systems feel blind to performance on even the most basic dimensions.

Robust oversight includes:

- **Accuracy and safety metrics:** Real-time detection of drift, data shifts, and unintended consequences

- **Operational and clinical outcomes:** Impact on length of stay, readmissions, clinician workload, and more

- **Financial and strategic value:** Clear visibility into whether the tool is delivering expected ROI

Real-time visibility prevents surprises and builds trust in deployed solutions

Early detection enables teams to course-correct before value erodes, safety risks emerge, **or trust declines among end users—lower trust leads to lower adoption and, ultimately, lower ROI**

Transparent outcome tracking makes it easier to scale what's working

Faster, Safer, Smarter: The Impact of Governance on Speed to Value

When health systems adopt structured AI governance, they don't just gain control—they gain momentum. The ability to demonstrate safety and impact from early AI investments builds trust, making it easier to secure buy-in, budget, and approval for future initiatives. Over time, governance creates a **flywheel effect**: each success fuels the next.
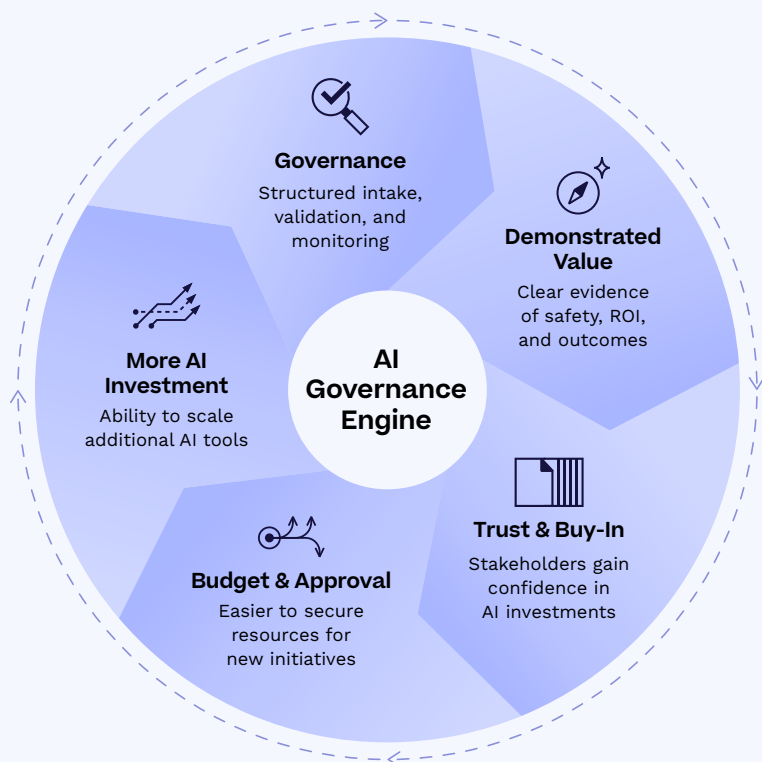
Without Governance

- Siloed pilots and decision-making
- Unclear ROI and stalled deployment
- Risk-averse stakeholders blocking scale and stalling innovation
- Time wasted chasing underperformers

With Governance

- Unified intake and oversight
- Faster go/no-go decisions
- Confident adoption with built-in guardrails
- Focus on high-performing, aligned tools

By turning governance into a repeatable engine, health systems can scale AI with discipline—without compromising safety, compliance, or equity. And with each success, the flywheel spins faster, building the credibility and momentum needed to fully realize AI's potential.

Governance as a Strategic Differentiator

Health systems with mature AI governance see measurable gains: faster time-to-value, lower risk, and greater ROI. By treating governance as a strategic capability—not a compliance checkbox—they:

- Manage AI as a portfolio, not isolated pilots
- Set clear ownership across clinical, operational, and IT leaders
- Require evidence of performance before and after deployment
- Create transparency that builds trust and accelerates adoption

The result:

AI investments scale faster, deliver sustained impact, and earn ongoing executive support.

Conclusion:

Governance Is the Path to Scalable AI ROI

Governance doesn't slow innovation—it makes innovation scalable. In a landscape where resources are constrained and margin pressure is real, health systems need a better way to manage AI decisions with speed and confidence.

Signal 1 was built for this moment.

Partner with Signal 1: Turn Oversight into Opportunity Responsibly

Signal 1 is a centralized AI management platform purpose-built for healthcare. We give health systems the tools to:

◆ Run a structured intake and approval process

◆ Evaluate AI solutions for clinical, operational, and financial value

◆ Monitor and manage model performance across the full lifecycle

◆ Govern innovation without bottlenecks

With Signal 1, governance becomes a strategic asset—not an obstacle.

Ready to unlock the full value of your AI investments?

Let's talk about how Signal 1 can help you turn fragmented innovation into measurable impact.

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SIGNAL 1

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