CASE STUDY

Advising Sanford Health on its Journey to Data Excellence

Our experts delivered a comprehensive plan for data modernization, including recommended technical and organizational changes.

Challenge

Sanford Health faced difficulties fully leveraging its data assets despite significant investment in data tools and technical talent. Two internal teams with overlapping responsibilities for data management often duplicated efforts, which created process inefficiencies. The organization also struggled to implement tools for data governance and automation, leading to repetitive, manual work and increased error risk.

Healthcare IT Leaders came in to conduct a comprehensive assessment with detailed recommendations to modernize the health system's approach to data management.

Solution

We led Sanford Health through a multiphase assessment designed to understand current capabilities and future needs. Key stakeholders were engaged to document objectives and existing technology capabilities within the context of specific use cases. This was followed by a comprehensive landscape assessment to understand current pain points and future requirements.
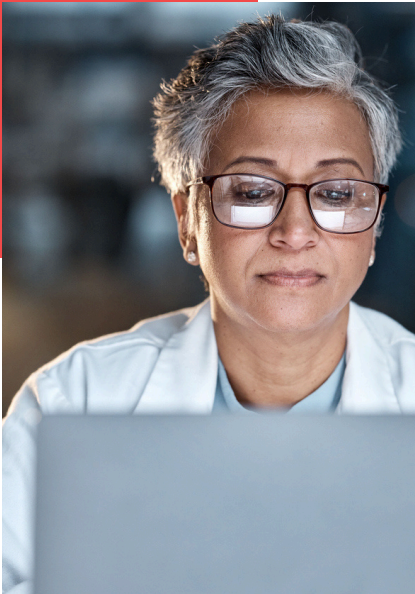
Our specialized advisors reviewed the organization across: Skills and Capabilities, Processes and Governance, and Technology and Tools. Based on early findings, the Process and Governance assessments were separated to create independent workstreams. Additionally, the selection of a Data Warehouse platform was expedited to speed up the overall platform.

Client Profile

Sanford Health is the largest rural health system in the United States. Headquartered in Sioux Falls, SD, the organization serves more than 1.4 million patients through an integrated delivery network with 48 medical centers, 211 clinic locations, 168 senior living centers, 2,900 Sanford physicians and advanced practice providers, and nine world clinic locations around the globe.

Project Details

- Our team of data management experts led a comprehensive analysis of the client's data tools and strategy.

- Identified key areas for improvement including a new Data Warehouse, data governance rules, and upskilling of key employees.

- Recommended new strategies for leveraging and monetizing data assets.

- Provided a clear roadmap and detailed project plan to support a multi-year data transformation journey.

With our discovery and analysis completed, we proposed a data transformation strategy for Sanford Health centered on four key areas for improvement:

- Data Governance
- Architecture Modernization
- Process Improvements
- Data Asset Optimization

First, we addressed Data Governance, proposing critical new roles, including a dedicated Data Governance Manager and distributed Data Stewards, and clearly delineated responsibilities between teams. We recommended a comprehensive training and certification program to address skill gaps, and create clear career development pathways. We also assisted Sanford through a targeted RFP process to identify a Data Governance vendor.

Second, we proposed modernizing the Data Architecture by migrating to Snowflake as the primary data warehouse solution, complemented by Talend and Amazon Web Services. This technical foundation would be strengthened by implementing dbt and SchemaChange via Azure DevOps, creating a robust framework for automated development. We also recommended an approach to Master Data Management (MDM) prioritizing data quality and processes in line with their data warehouse plans.

Our third set of recommendations focused on process improvements, introducing DevOps methodologies and automated business intelligence workflows to streamline data processing and reporting. We also recommended simple changes to their ServiceNow workflows to improve task tracking and responsiveness for better customer service.

Lastly, we proposed new ways for the organization to think about leveraging the full potential of its data assets, including a monetization strategy using Snowflake's sharing features, and using Amazon AI for advanced predictive analytics.

> *Healthcare IT Leaders provided exceptional support in developing our data management strategy and guiding our migration to a centralized data environment.*

Dane Hudelson
Senior Director,
Enterprise Data and
Analytics, Sanford Health

Results

To the client's delight, our team's recommendations were delivered ahead of schedule and under budget. The deliverables included a detailed 18-month data transformation journey for Sanford Health, carefully sequenced to minimize disruption while maximizing impact and taking advantage of existing tools and skills.

We identified necessary changes in the organizational structure to reduce task duplication and improve response times and provided a comprehensive technical roadmap to modernize data management. We recommended tools and processes that address Sanford's specific challenges and plans for the future.

By addressing both technical and organizational challenges holistically, our experts have put Sanford Health on the path to creating a sustainable infrastructure for data-driven innovation in patient care.

"Healthcare IT Leaders established a strong foundation for our Data Governance Plan, setting us up for long-term success," according to Dane Hudelson, Senior Director, Enterprise Data & Analytics, Sanford Health.

"I highly recommend Healthcare IT Leaders for complex data modernization initiatives," said Hudelson.

Strengthened data governance and improved data quality

Modernized Technical Infrastructure

Foundation for advanced analytics and data monetization

HEALTHCARE
IT LEADERS