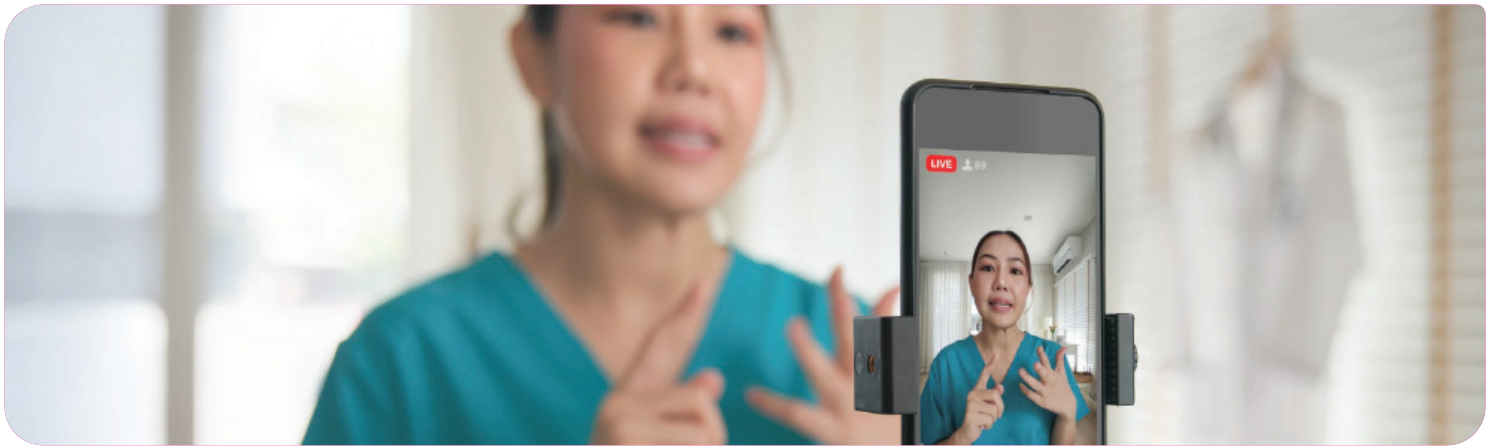




Operationalizing AI in Patient Experience





The adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare has surged with 22% of healthcare organizations implementing domain-specific AI tools and almost two-thirds of healthcare leaders believe improving patient experience is the area where AI tools will have the greatest impact.

The expectation is not misplaced. Patient experience has become a defining metric. The shift to value-based care means that healthcare organizations embraced a patient-centric model that influences reimbursement and outcomes. Even as patient experience scores trend upward, gaps remain.^{2,3}

AI offers a path to close the gaps. Enabling real time insights and predictive engagement allows healthcare organizations to anticipate patient needs instead of reacting to them. An AI-driven patient experience ecosystem that uses patient data to improve engagement uses data to generate the insights required to need to understand and anticipate patient needs, streamline care coordination and improve decision-making.

Healthcare organizations need to operationalize AI-driven patient experience programs and adopt a practical framework to reduce friction across the patient journey and create more personalized healthcare experiences to succeed. But there is a disconnect between ambition and execution.

AI investments represent 46% of total healthcare spending, topping \$46 billion in 2025.⁴ Often, healthcare organizations invest in AI tools without realizing their value. Pilots stall, systems fail to scale and patient experience improvements are incremental, not transformative.

Not all AI implementations are created equal. While adoption rates are high, maturity levels vary widely and that distinction is what separates organizations seeing meaningful impact from those struggling to move beyond experimentation.

“AI is rapidly emerging as a transformative capability, and healthcare leaders are eager to begin operationalizing its value. However, many AI-driven customer experience initiatives fall short because organizations prioritize the technology before clearly defining the underlying processes and business problems they are solving for.”

– Jimmy Guest
Vice President of Information Technology, Sutherland

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of total healthcare spending is represented by AI investments, topping \$46 billion in 2025.⁴

Why Maturity Matters

Successful implementation requires a preparedness to adopt, integrate, govern and scale AI technologies across clinical and operational processes.⁵ In healthcare, where patient experience is shaped by countless interactions across clinical and administrative touchpoints, this maturity is critical.

When AI is deployed within a mature framework, it changes the nature of patient engagement. Predictive analytics can identify patients at risk of disengagement or non-adherence; automated outreach can deliver timely reminders and education tailored to individual needs; and omnichannel engagement ensures consistent interactions across platforms.

In contrast, a lack of maturity can lead to fragmentation and an overall patient experience that remains disjointed.

Of the 78% of health systems that have adopted AI, just over half feel prepared to implement them, citing concerns with data quality, standardization and governance, data privacy concerns and lack of strategic vision or leadership alignment.⁶

Achieving AI maturity requires a stepwise approach that includes strong information security and ethics policies that guide pilot programs before scaled deployments, according to Guest.

“Organizations with higher maturity reduce administrative burdens on clinicians, freeing them for meaningful patient interactions and deliver transparency and simplicity that empower patients to manage their health. Without maturity, AI pilots remain isolated, failing to deliver enterprise-wide impact on experience metrics like satisfaction scores or engagement rates.”

– Jimmy Guest
Vice President of Information
Technology, Sutherland



“Deploying AI in patient experience should start with assessing readiness and running targeted pilots with clearly defined success metrics. From there, organizations can scale iteratively expanding scope, applying insights gained, and continuously recalibrating.”

– **Jimmy Guest**

Vice President of Information Technology, Sutherland

Assessing AI Maturity

AI decision makers from leading health systems created an AI Maturity Roadmap to guide best practices for industry-wide AI adoption.⁷

LEVEL 1

Awareness

Early AI interest with risk of overhyping

LEVEL 2

Active

AI experimentation, mostly in a data science context

LEVEL 3

Operational

AI in production, creating value by process optimization or product/service innovations

LEVEL 4

Systemic

AI is pervasively used for digital process transformation and disruptive new digital business models

LEVEL 5

Transformational

AI is part of business DNA

Enabling Advancement Through Connected Data

Achieving meaningful AI-driven patient experience transformation requires more than access to data. A combination of fragmentation, mergers, and legacy infrastructure have left many organizations with disconnected data environments.

Patient information is often spread across multiple systems; contact center agents and patient access teams frequently operate without full visibility into clinical context while clinicians may lack insight into prior patient interactions related to scheduling, billing, or support inquiries.

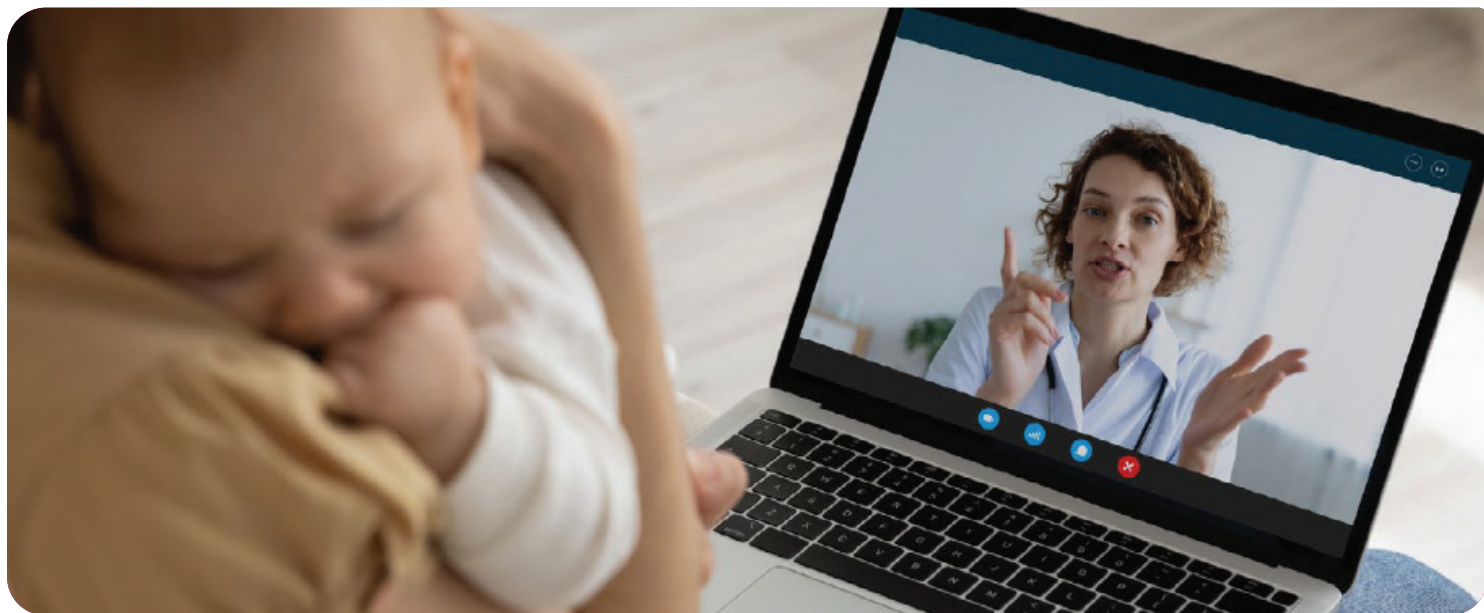
Combined with inconsistent formats and limited interoperability, it becomes difficult to generate the unified, real-time insights that AI depends on—and the consequences are significant. AI systems trained on incomplete or siloed data result in insights that lack context, limited personalization and missed opportunities for proactive intervention that impair value.

While half of healthcare organizations have implemented AI across departments and fragmented data systems are often cited as a significant barrier to scaling AI.⁸ The result: most healthcare organizations are still early in AI maturity with just 9% achieving mature adoption.⁹

"If your data is fragmented and AI is only applied to a subset of it, you're unlikely to see meaningful outcomes. Fragmentation creates a disconnect across key patient experience touchpoints. The result is a disjointed experience where patients must repeatedly provide the same information, and staff are limited in their ability to resolve issues efficiently."

– Jimmy Guest

Vice President of Information Technology, Sutherland



Enabling advancement is not about layering AI onto existing or new processes. Unlocking the full value of AI requires guardrails. Ethical guidelines, compliance frameworks and information security policies must be established before AI is deployed at scale to ensure systems operate within defined boundaries and align with organizational values.

Healthcare organizations need to invest in governance frameworks, master data management and secure data access in order to integrate data and align it with patient experience goals and support meaningful outcomes across the patient journey.

A focus on governance doesn't have to stall innovation. Using human-in-the-loop models can balance risk and progress. Incorporating human oversight into AI workflows, especially in early stages, balances automation efficiency and improves diagnostic accuracy over AI performance alone, allowing healthcare organizations to validate outputs, refine algorithms and build confidence in the system.¹⁰

"We maintain a human-in-the-loop approach to validate outputs before we hit send on an execution. We also capture feedback post-interaction to determine effectiveness, ensuring the system continuously learns and improves."

– Jimmy Guest
Vice President of Information
Technology, Sutherland



A human-in-the-loop approach transforms AI from a black box into a collaborative tool where human expertise and machine intelligence reinforce one another, which can result in significant savings. For every \$10 billion in payer revenue, AI solutions could save up to \$300 million in administrative costs and increase revenues up to \$1.24 billion.¹¹

Guest also recommends establishing interdisciplinary AI governance committees, adopting the World Health Organization Ethics and Governance of Artificial Intelligence for Health or similar frameworks, conducting regular audits and ensuring robust consent processes as part of the process of operationalizing AI.¹²

5 Reasons AI Maturity Stalls

1

Fragmented data and lack of interoperability across systems

Patient data spread across EHRs, revenue cycle, and engagement platforms prevents a unified view and limits AI effectiveness

2

Lack of a clear operating model to scale AI

Organizations pilot AI solutions but lack the governance, workflows, and ownership needed to operationalize and scale them

3

Data privacy or security risks and regulatory compliance fears

Compliance requirements and risk concerns slow adoption and limit data accessibility

4

Change resistance and workflow disruption

Clinicians and staff face competing priorities, and poorly integrated solutions create friction rather than efficiency

5

Limited ROI visibility and investment alignment

Difficulty linking AI initiatives to measurable outcomes makes it hard to justify and sustain investment



The Future of AI-Enabled Patient Experience

The global AI healthcare market is expected to surpass \$500 billion by 2033—up from \$36.6 billion in 2025 and tools that enhance communication and patient engagement are expected to drive the increase.¹³

AI tools that streamline access, scale personalized care and free up clinician time are expected to help address clinician burnout and growing healthcare labor shortages while allowing for more patient-centric care.

AI capabilities that can shape the patient experience continue to evolve and have grown to include agentic AI, multimodal AI for synthesizing data across sources, advanced personalization at scale and AI companions in the full patient journey. Healthcare organizations can prepare by investing in data infrastructure, building governance for ethical and agentic use, upskilling teams and partnering for responsible integration while maintaining trust and safety.

"It's an iterative process. We think of it as an infinity loop; it's continuous and organizations must constantly recalibrate."

– Jimmy Guest
Vice President of Information
Technology, Sutherland

\$500 billion

**is the projected value of the global
AI healthcare market by 2033.**

Shifts in how AI success is measured are also essential. Instead of focusing solely on satisfaction scores, healthcare organizations should prioritize impact-oriented metrics that tie to patient experience and operational outcomes such as reductions in hospital admission rates, streamlined care delivery and enhanced patient trust.

Having the right partner can make the difference between a stalled pilot and mature, scalable patient experience program that includes end-to-end expertise, data integration and governance support, experience-driven design and measurable solutions.

“Experienced partners like Sutherland bring proven expertise in AI-driven patient experience solutions, including digital engagement, automation, and contact center optimization tailored to healthcare. Partnerships accelerate maturity by providing ready frameworks, risk mitigation, measurable outcomes and scalability, allowing organizations to focus on core care while achieving enterprise impact reliably and compliantly.”

– Jimmy Guest
Vice President of Information
Technology, Sutherland



The Best KPIs to Measure AI Impact on Patient Experience

A positive patient experience is correlated with higher hospital profitability. Healthcare organizations should focus on six important key performance indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the impact of AI on patient experience.¹⁴

Patient satisfaction scores

Scores like Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) have a direct impact on hospital reimbursements, patient retention and hospital reputations.

Patient effort score and first contact resolution

The metrics reflect the ease of getting issues resolved. Improvements in these scores are associated with improvements in patient satisfaction.

Patient sentiment scores

AI can track emotional shifts during calls and chats to assess if patients become frustrated and drive actionable insights into what drives positive patient experiences.

Clinical outcomes

Decreased hospital admissions, increased medication adherence, fewer diagnostic delays and other improvements in outcome metrics are critical for a better patient experience.

Operational metrics

Reduced wait times, efficient scheduling and check-ins and clinician time savings achieved through AI increases satisfaction, boosts trusts and improves the patient experience.

Patient retention and lifetime value

Frictionless experiences and efficient, effective service can build patient loyalty and more likely to recommend providers and health systems.

Tracking these KPIs pre- and post-AI deployment can help quantify the return on investment of AI in patient experience programs.



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