CUREIS HEALTHCARE RESOURCES

AI Readiness Assessment

This checklist distills a data-first strategy into a comprehensive practical assessment that will help you evaluate your organization's readiness for successful AI deployment.

Why This Assessment Matters

The research is clear: healthcare AI investment will exceed $1.4 billion in 2026, yet only 1 in 8 AI pilots deliver measurable ROI, based on current research averages* (see endnote). Gartner traces 85% of AI model failures to data quality issues.

The difference between the organizations succeeding and the ones burning budget is not the algorithm — it's the data foundation beneath it.

Organizations that implement a data-first strategy before deploying AI improve their odds of success from roughly 1-in-8 to 4-in-5. This checklist helps you take that first step.

The Checklist

	1. Data Quality — Fix the Foundation First
☐	**Audit your RCM data chain sources.** Inventory every system feeding your AI initiatives - claims, eligibility files, remittance data, denial feeds, clearinghouse transactions, and so on. How many sources? What formats? Do they agree with each other? If you can't list them, your AI can't trust them.
☐	**Measure your data accuracy rate.** Validate data against systems of record — not just spot-checks by analysts. Automated fact-checking is the gold standard. Know your error rate before AI amplifies it.
☐	**Identify completeness gaps that drive denials.** Map the critical fields that are routinely missing, inconsistent, or stale, such as missing modifiers, incomplete authorization data, and stale eligibility. In healthcare, missing data directly impacts financial results.
☐	**Quantify manual cleanup effort.** What percentage of analyst time goes to manual reconciliation and desktop workarounds? If it's above 30%, your data infrastructure is the bottleneck, not your people.
☐	**Assess data timeliness.** How current is the data your AI will consume? Stale data produces stale insights. Determine whether your data flows are real-time/daily/weekly, and whether that cadence matches your AI use case.

	2. Data Access & Interoperability
☐	**Map data silos and barriers.** Identify where critical information is trapped behind system boundaries. If your AI can't see the full picture across systems, it can't generate accurate insights.
☐	**Evaluate interoperability standards.** Are you using HL7 FHIR or other standardized formats for data exchange? FHIR readiness is no longer optional for scalable healthcare AI initiatives.
☐	**Assess cross-system data conformance.** When the same data element exists in multiple systems, do the values match? A unified, conformed data layer eliminates contradictions that confuse AI models.
☐	**Catalog trading partner and stakeholder data quality.** Clearinghouses, payers, providers, vendors, and government all contribute data with their own anomalies. Know where the quality breaks down in your inbound data chain.
	3. Governance & Compliance
☐	**Define data ownership for AI feeds.** Assign clear accountability for who owns and is responsible for the data feeding your AI tools. Ambiguity here leads to finger-pointing when results disappoint.
☐	**Review HIPAA and privacy controls.** Ensure privacy, security, and compliance guardrails are in place before AI touches patient data. Only about 15% of healthcare organizations have adapted governance for AI despite implementing new projects. Don't wait until you face an audit.
☐	**Establish AI model validation protocols.** Before any model goes live, define how it will be tested, monitored, and evaluated. Include human-in-the-loop oversight for high-risk decisions.
☐	**Create an AI ethics framework.** Document policies for bias detection, transparency, and decision traceability. AI in healthcare demands accountability beyond what's typical in other industries.
	4. Organizational Readiness
☐	**Align leadership on data-first priorities.** Frame data quality as the insurance policy for your AI investment, not a separate cost center. Your board needs to see the multiplier effect: investing in data turns a 12% success rate average into 80%.
☐	**Assess your team's AI literacy.** Training should cover baseline competencies for all staff interacting with AI, with advanced modules for specialists. Regulation increasingly requires this.
☐	**Set realistic expectations and timelines.** If your AI pilot has a 6-month runway but your data roadmap stretches to 2028, that gap will sink the project. Align timelines or find faster paths to close the gap.
☐	**Plan for workflow integration.** Users abandon AI tools that add clicks or disrupt familiar processes. Design for seamless integration into existing workflows — if there's no immediate efficiency payoff, adoption flatlines.

	5. Measure Your Baseline
☐	**What is your current denial rate?"** Advanced automation, including autonomous AI, must reduce denials to be considered successful.
☐	**What is your cost to collect?** Successful AI deployment should reduce this, measurably. Start with an accurate number.
☐	**How many FTEs touch manual reconciliation / how many hours monthly?** To set realistic ROI expectations and AI success metrics, you will need to measure hours saved.
	6. AI Vendor Evaluation
☐	**Ask: "What does your model assume about our data?"** If the vendor can't give a specific, detailed answer about the data their model needs, that's a red flag. Demo environments use perfect data - yours won't be.
☐	**Ask: "How closely does training data match our environment?"** A model trained on curated, clean data will struggle with real-world healthcare data anomalies. Understand the gap before you commit.
☐	**Ask: "What's your plan when the data doesn't match?"** It won't. It never does. Vendors with a thoughtful answer to this question are the ones worth working with.
☐	**Distinguish AI expertise from healthcare data expertise.** A vendor may be brilliant at building models but inexperienced with real-world healthcare data. You need both disciplines.
	7. Your Data-First Action Plan
☐	**Start with one AI use case, not an enterprise overhaul.** Don't let the enterprise-scale project sit on a shelf waiting for budget. A data-first approach can be scoped to a specific use case and deliver measurable ROI in weeks, not years.
☐	**Evaluate a "data utility" approach.** A new category of tool can sit alongside your existing stack, ingest data from multiple sources, validate and conform it, and deliver clean feeds to AI products — without ripping out what you have.
☐	**Match vendor flexibility to your team.** Some organizations have strong IT departments that want to own the process; others need white-glove support. Ensure your vendor adapts to you, not the other way around.
☐	**Define success metrics before you deploy.** Know what measurable ROI looks like for your specific pilot. If you can't define it before launch, you won't be able to prove it after.
	END

Quick Self-Assessment

Count the items you can confidently check off as complete today. This gives you a snapshot of where your organization stands, and where to focus next.

Score	Where You Stand	Recommended Next Step
0 – 7	Foundation stage. Your data environment needs significant work before AI can deliver reliable results. Prioritize data quality and governance.	Start with a data quality audit.
8 – 20	Building stage. You have a partial foundation in place. Focus on closing gaps in your weakest section before scaling AI initiatives.	Target your weakest section.
21 – 28	Ready stage. Your data foundation is strong. You're positioned to deploy AI with confidence and see measurable ROI.	Launch a targeted AI pilot.

"The difference between success and failure with AI isn't the algorithm - it's the data. A data-first strategy is the insurance policy for your AI investment."

— Chris Sawotin, CEO, CureIS Healthcare

Research Endnote

MIT / NANDA Initiative. Kretschmer, T., & Khashabi, P. (2025). "Why 95% of GenAI Pilots Fail." MIT Center for Information Systems Research (CISR) and NANDA Initiative. Based on 52 executive interviews, 153 survey responses, and analysis of 300+ public AI deployments. Reported by Fortune, August 2025.

Gartner, Inc. (2025). "Lack of AI-Ready Data Puts AI Projects at Risk." Press release, February 2025. Gartner predicts that through 2026, over 60% of AI projects lacking AI-ready data foundations will be abandoned or scaled back. The widely cited finding that 85% of AI/ML projects fail to deliver due to poor data quality originates from Gartner's 2018 forecast for outcomes through 2022.

RAND Corporation. (2024). "The Root Causes of Failure for Artificial Intelligence Projects." Research Report RRA2680-1. Finds 70–85% of AI initiatives fail to move beyond pilot stage, citing data infrastructure gaps, organizational misalignment, and unrealistic expectations as primary causes.

Orion Health. (2025). "Why AI Projects Fail in Healthcare — And How to Fix It." Orion Health Blog, orionhealth.com. Attributes 80%+ healthcare AI failure rates to fragmented EHR systems and inconsistently structured clinical data full of gaps. Under "Quantify manual cleanup effort" - could reference the ?est $43B cost-of-caring number and denial rework hours.

Resources

Read the companion blog post: Healthcare AI Investment in the "Prove-It" Era

Explore the data-first approach: Trustworthy Healthcare AI Demands a Data-First Approach

UniSync™ – the CureIS Healthcare Data Utility: Learn how UniSync operates alongside your system to deliver real-time, certified AI-ready data to your tools: cureis.com/unisync

Reach out to discuss AI readiness strategies for your organization: solutions@cureis.com | 651.207.6280 | cureis.com