ABT THOUGHT LEADERSHIP PAPER

A Use Case Roadmap for AI-Ready Community Health

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Successful generative artificial intelligence (AI) adoption begins not with technology, but with disciplined development of use cases.

Across the country, small and mid-size healthcare organizations see AI's potential to lower administrative burden, improve patient outcomes, and streamline reporting. Yet few have taken the leap. According to the National Association of Community Health Centers' 2025 Health Information Technology and Data Needs Assessment, **64% of health centers are not yet using generative AI tools but plan to**, and **77% do not use machine learning or predictive models**, though many are preparing to implement them. The interest is high, but the path forward is uncertain.

For many of these organizations, investment in AI feels daunting precisely because the workforce is already overextended. Without the capacity to strategically define and prioritize use cases, even well-intentioned AI initiatives risk diverting limited time and resources toward tools that fail to align with mission needs, regulatory expectations, or real-world workflows. Use cases provide the needed focus. By starting with "What critical problems do we need to solve, and where could AI deliver disproportionate impact?" rather than "What AI tools can we use?" healthcare organizations build a portfolio of initiatives that are practical, fundable, and impactful.

Benefits of focusing on use cases rather than tools:

- **Translate Strategy into Action:** Use cases are the bridge between high-level strategy ("We want to use AI") and operational reality ("We're automating prior authorization review in cardiology"). **Mission alignment is clear**: Each project is tied to an outcome (better patient safety, lower costs, improved access) and explains what the AI will and won't do, reducing risk of overreach.
- **Ensure Investments Are Targeted and Defensible:** Use cases illuminate **where to spend first**, so you prioritize **high-impact, low-risk pilots** over speculative projects.
- **De-Risk Technology Adoption:** AI comes with risks: bias, compliance failures, poor adoption. Use cases help organizations clarify **data requirements** up front, surfacing gaps before you make investments.
- **Provide a Basis for Measurement:** Use cases help define **baseline metrics** and set **target improvements** to all leaders to demonstrate ROI, secure future funding, and build organizational trust in AI.

Case Study: A Community Health Center's AI Journey

One mid-sized Federally Qualified Health Center serving 18,000 patients, faced mounting challenges: staff burnout, delays in prior authorizations, and an 18% no-show rate for specialty appointments. During a board meeting, the CEO asked: *"Could AI help—and where do we start?"*

The team realized they needed a roadmap. Vendors pitched flashy tools, but none explained how those tools fit the center's mission or workflows. Leadership feared "pilots to nowhere."

To chart a path, the center convened a cross-functional workshop. Mapping the cardiology referral process revealed pain points: long authorization delays, heavy documentation burden, and missed appointments. From these insights, three ideas emerged: automating prior authorizations, AI-assisted documentation, and predicting no-shows.

Using a Value–Feasibility Matrix, the team narrowed its focus. Prior authorization automation was valuable but complex; AI scribes raised compliance concerns. Predictive analytics for no-shows stood out—data was clean, risk was low, and results could come quickly. They scoped a pilot: *"Use AI to predict high-risk no-show patients for cardiology and send personalized reminders. Goal: reduce no-shows by 15% in six months."*

Six months later, no-shows dropped by 22%, and staff saved 10 hours a week on manual outreach. This built momentum for a second pilot on prior authorizations. The experience underscored three lessons: start with use cases, not tools; engage staff early; and measure impact to secure future funding.

This scenario was generated using AI to illustrate a typical healthcare use case development process.

- **Enable Organizational Buy-In and Change Management:** AI adoption is as much about people as technology. Use cases help employees see how AI will help **their specific workflows**, enabling them to become AI champions. Early, successful use cases also build **momentum and confidence**, smoothing the path to larger-scale adoption.
- **Support Scalable AI Programs:** Use cases allow you to build an AI **portfolio** rather than isolated pilots. Organizations can score, compare and sequence each use case into a roadmap. Lessons from early use cases (data prep, governance, training) carry forward into the next wave. Over time, this creates a **repeatable process** for selecting, testing, and scaling AI responsibly.

Three Steps to Use Cases that Work

Step 1: Identify

First, idea generation. Facilitate brainstorming and diverse inputs through cross-functional discovery workshops to capture leadership's priorities and the pain points of staff who experience inefficiencies firsthand. Additional techniques for use case identification include:

- **Journey mapping**: Walk through identified workflows and highlight friction points and opportunities for improvements.
- **"Day in the life" interviews**: Ask employees to describe their workday and where time is lost.
- **Pain point surveys**: Collect staff feedback to prioritize the most common or frustrating tasks.
- **External benchmarking**: Look at how peer organizations apply AI.

Step 2: Refine

Now that you have raw ideas, make sure they're viable, safe, and aligned with strategy. Without refinement, teams often chase "cool" AI ideas that aren't practical or valuable. Try these techniques to focus limited resources on what truly moves the needle.

When refining **AI use cases**, it's important to involve multiple internal groups so the use cases are **technically feasible, ethically sound, compliant, and aligned with business strategy**. The exact mix depends on your organization's structure, but may include the following:

- Strategic leadership: Ensure alignment with company goals, priorities, and risk appetite
- Business unit leaders: Validate AI use cases against real operational or customer pain points.
- Data governance teams: Assess quality, completeness, and accessibility of data.
- Legal & compliance officers: Validate regulatory implications early, before pilots start.
- Operational and end-user teams: Test whether refined ideas make sense in practice.
- Change management/HR leaders: Gauge staff readiness and training needs.

Step 3: Prioritize

Now, *which use cases do we execute first?* You need to know which projects deliver **the biggest impact on strategic goals**, solve the most pressing pain points, and offer **clear, measurable outcomes** within a reasonable time frame. You also need a **clear rationale** why some AI ideas move forward while others wait

A use case scoring matrix is an effective tool to **objectively prioritize AI initiatives**—especially if you have multiple promising ideas but limited resources. Per the sample matrix below, score each use case and then multiply the score (1–5) by the weight, totaling across all criteria. Highest scores indicate priority use cases.

This matrix helps organizations start with "low-risk, high-reward" pilots—projects where data is readily available, risks are manageable, and results can be measured in months, not years. Success builds momentum for larger and more complex AI initiatives.

AI Use Case Scoring Matrix

How to Use: Multiply each score (1—5) by its weight. The highest total wins priority.

Criteria	Weight	Scoring (1—5)	Notes/Examples
Impact on Outcomes (Improved access, reduced errors, increased efficiency).	30%	1 = Minimal impact 5 = Major improvement in outcomes/safety	Ex: AI reduces readmissions, flags abnormal results faster
Staff Efficiency (Hours saved per week, reduction in burnout, lower turnover).	20%	1 = No time saved 5 = Significant time savings (hours/day)	Ex: AI scribe reduces documentation burden
Financial Return (Reduced claims denials, cost avoidance, or revenue capture).	20%	1 = Low/no ROI 5 = Strong ROI within 12—18 months	Ex: AI claims tool reduces denials by 20%
Technical Feasibility (Existing data and IT infrastructure readiness).	15%	1 = Major data/infrastructure gaps 5 = Ready to implement	Ex: Data already exists in structured EHR format
Compliance/Risk (HIPAA alignment, transparency, auditability).	10%	1 = High regulatory risk 5 = Low/no compliance concerns	Ex: Use case doesn't involve sensitive patient decisioning
Scalability (Potential to expand beyond the pilot area).	5%	1 = Limited to niche area 5 = Expandable to multiple sites/ departments	Ex: Appointment reminder AI could scale across specialties

How Abt Can Help

We help healthcare organizations move from AI ambition to implementation. Our teams combine deep healthcare policy and operational expertise with advanced data science and systems integration capabilities to turn AI concepts into measurable results.

- **Facilitate cross-functional workshops** that identify high-impact, low-risk AI opportunities.
- **Assess data readiness and interoperability** to ensure use cases are technically feasible and compliant with privacy, bias, and audit requirements.
- **Prioritize and pilot AI initiatives** that demonstrate measurable outcomes—reducing manual burden, improving care coordination, and supporting performance-based funding goals.
- **Build human-centered governance and training frameworks** so staff can adopt AI responsibly and confidently.

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