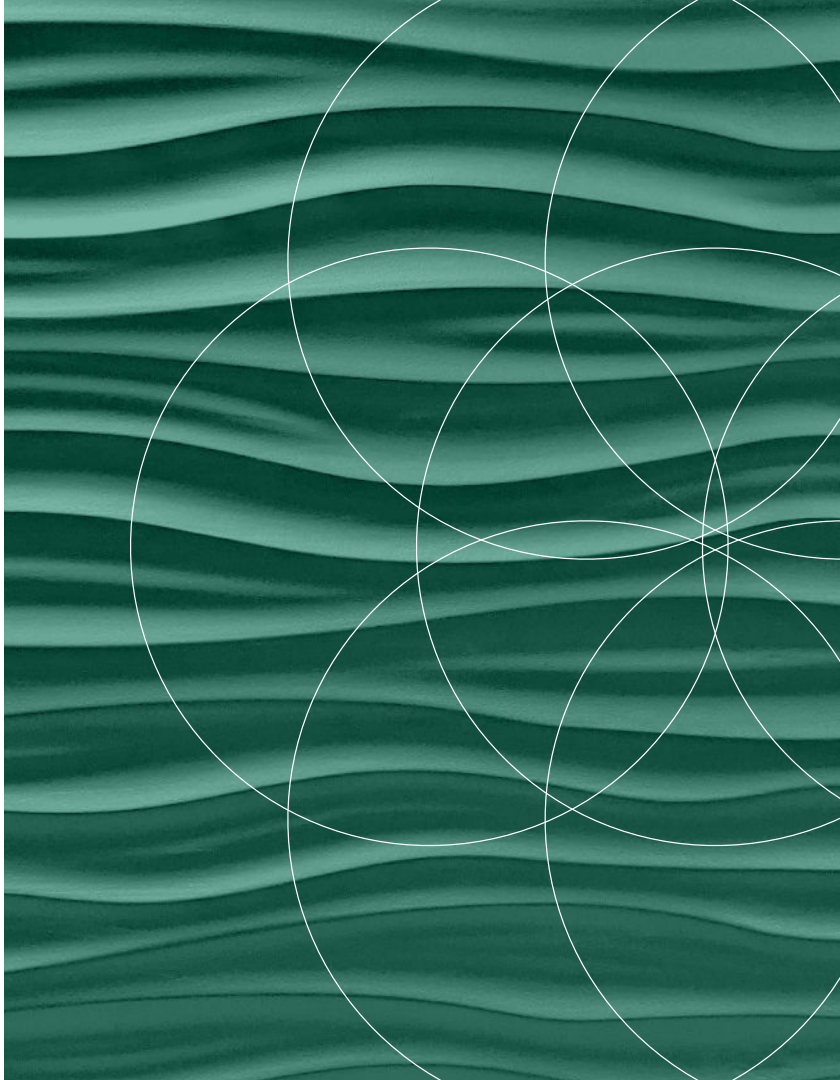
FORRESTER®

# Improve Clinical Outcomes And Grow Rehab Practices With Next-Gen EHR

Advanced Analytics And AI Enablement Allow Rehab Therapy Leaders To Grow Business, Stay Agile, And Deliver Organizationwide Change

Get started →

FORRESTER OPPORTUNITY SNAPSHOT: A CUSTOM STUDY COMMISSIONED BY NET HEALTH | SEPTEMBER 2023



# Overview

Electronic health records (EHR) may have transformed healthcare, but they are long overdue for an upgrade. As technology improves, rehab therapy leaders must invest in enhancements for their EHR platforms and use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to power advanced automation and predictive analytics that improve clinical outcomes, increase operational efficiency, and grow their businesses.

In our survey of 217 rehab therapy leaders from private practices, hospitals, and contract therapy organizations, we found that rehab therapy leaders know investing in advanced EHR analytics is critical to achieving their goals of accelerating growth while remaining scalable, improving patient outcomes, and optimizing operations. But many EHR platforms don't offer predictive analytics, which makes it difficult for healthcare organizations to create actionable insights that will propel the business forward.

## Key Findings



Rehab leaders' top priorities are accelerating growth and improving patient outcomes. To achieve these goals, rehab practices need to make better decisions at the point of care by using data analytics.



Not only do enhanced EHR platforms increase operational efficiency, their predictive analytics and AI-driven automation dramatically reduce strain on staff.



Though improving EHR analytics capabilities is critical to achieving business goals, rehab leaders report that the biggest gap in current EHR platforms is a lack of predictive analytics.

# Rehab Leaders' Top Priority Is Accelerating Practice Growth

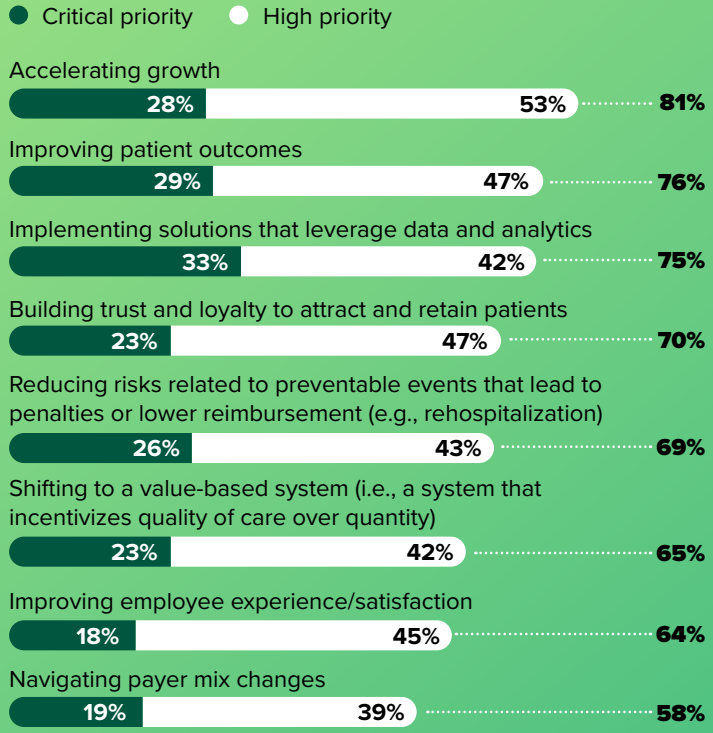
Rehab leaders have many priorities that will impact the bottom line in the next two years, as over half of respondents rated all measured goals in this report as a critical or high priority. Notably, they were most focused on accelerating practice growth. Improving patient outcomes and implementing data and analytics solutions are in a statistical tie for second.

This surprising finding makes more sense because implementing analytics was rated the most critical priority in this study. When considering the potential impact of analytics, the reason for this standing in rehab therapy practices' plans is clear. Embedding data and analytics solutions into workflows has the potential to affect nearly every other goal, ultimately allowing leaders to improve patient outcomes, drive revenue, and reduce costs.

**80%**
agree that being able to predict patient needs would improve outcomes.



## "How important are the following business priorities to your organization in the next 24 months?"




Base: 217 electronic health records (EHR) strategy decision-makers at regional to enterprise-sized private practice rehab, hospital, and contract therapy organizations in the US
Note: Total percentages may not equal separate values due to rounding.
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Net Health, September 2023

# Rehab Leaders Look To Grow By Improving Decision-Making, Optimizing EHR Analytics, And Reducing Costs

Rehab leaders reported that growing their practices and improving patient outcomes are predicated on improving decision-making (both at the point of care and at the business level), reducing costs, and investing in EHR platforms' analytics capabilities.

Enhanced EHR platforms that leverage predictive analytics and AI-driven automation allow rehab practices to unlock business growth by identifying patient-specific needs that improve care, uncovering business insights, and controlling the bottom line through reducing billing errors and improving coding accuracy.

To reach peak performance, rehab leaders must invest in more advanced analytics capabilities and acknowledge that rehab practices, like other healthcare organizations, are data warehouses with a responsibility to leverage analytics to create insights and improve care.




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# Rehab Practices Are Moving Towards AI-Driven EHR Platforms

At the time of the study, 60% of respondents' organizations had implemented advanced, AI-driven EHR analytics, with an additional 11% in the implementation process.

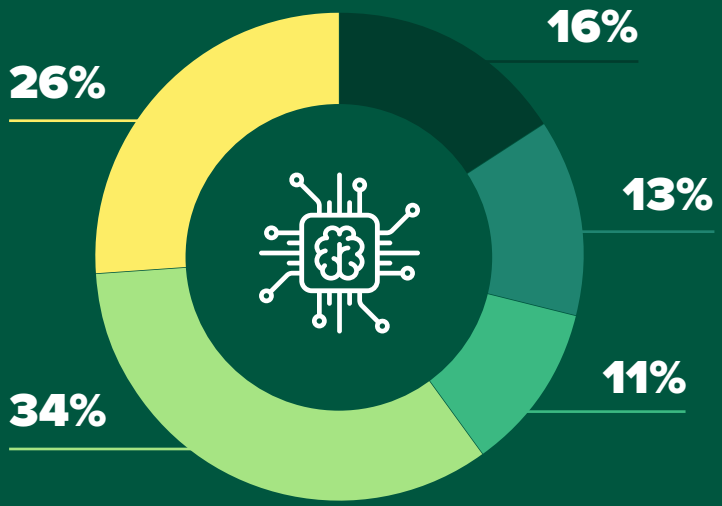
But success requires more than implementation. Rehab practices must: 1) ensure staff adopt the advanced, AI-driven EHR analytics, 2) invest to expand and upgrade capabilities, and 3) continuously refine documentation and data collection processes. Investing in an enhanced EHR platform that is built on these advanced capabilities is an effective way to accomplish these.

However, less than half of rehab practices that have implemented advanced capabilities are investing in expanding or upgrading those capabilities.

Without the right data security, data hygiene, and analytics capabilities, no amount of data will be enough to improve outcomes, accelerate growth, or reduce strain on staff.



**"What are your company's investment plans for advanced, AI-driven electronic health record (EHR) analytics?"**




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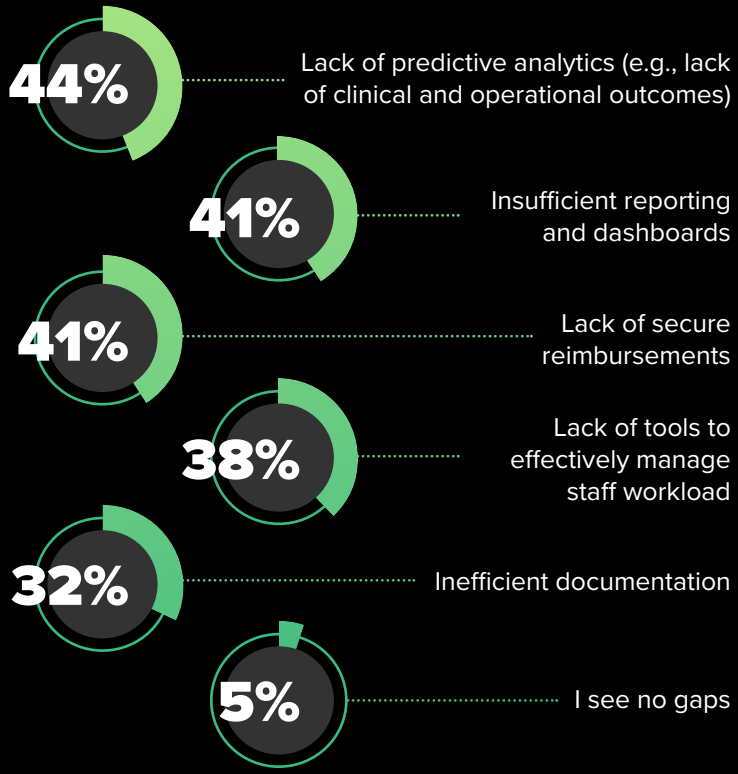
# Current EHR Platforms Are Incomplete

Mature healthcare organizations don't rely on traditional EHR platform offerings that fall short in mobilizing data to meet today's consumer demands, regulatory requirements, and compliance standards.

One of the biggest gaps in these offerings is the lack of predictive analytics that can improve clinical and operational outcomes. Other notable gaps include insufficient reporting capabilities (including dashboards), lack of secure reimbursements, and lack of tools to effectively manage staff workload.

But these gaps also represent opportunities for forward-thinking rehab leaders. As rehab organizations mature digitally and become tech-led healthcare businesses investing in the next generation of EHRs that maximize capabilities, they will improve care, grow the business, and create more efficient operations more effectively. These investments will differentiate leading providers.

**"Where do you see the biggest gaps in your organization's current EHR capabilities?"**




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# Rehab Practices Face Many Challenges Upgrading EHR Platforms

Under any circumstance, upgrading EHR platforms is not easy: 93% of respondents reported their organizations face significant challenges. However, only 28% reported costs as a concern, indicating that the challenges are more systemic.

The biggest hurdles to upgrading EHR platforms and implementing enhanced capabilities (e.g., predictive analytics, AI-driven automation) come from concerns over data security, a lack of internal skills and resources, and a lack of integration compatibility with existing systems.

Healthcare firms are extraordinarily vulnerable to data breaches, so it is no wonder that data security is top of mind. Unfortunately, they also have a shortage of internal skills and resources to operate and manage advanced EHR platforms. But this lack of skills may be solved by intuitive technology that provides them with the insights they need to make better clinical and business decisions.

**"What challenges does your organization face in upgrading/expanding its EHR platform to apply advanced analytics/AI?"**

**47%** Data-security concerns

**32%** Risk of regulatory noncompliance

**46%** Lack of internal skills and resources

**28%** Costs (e.g., lack of budget, inability to demonstrate ROI)

**38%** Lack of compatibility/ integration

**22%** Lack of confidence in EHR analytics

**35%** Low-quality data (e.g., missing data, lots of errors, different naming conventions)

**21%** Lack of awareness of EHR analytics

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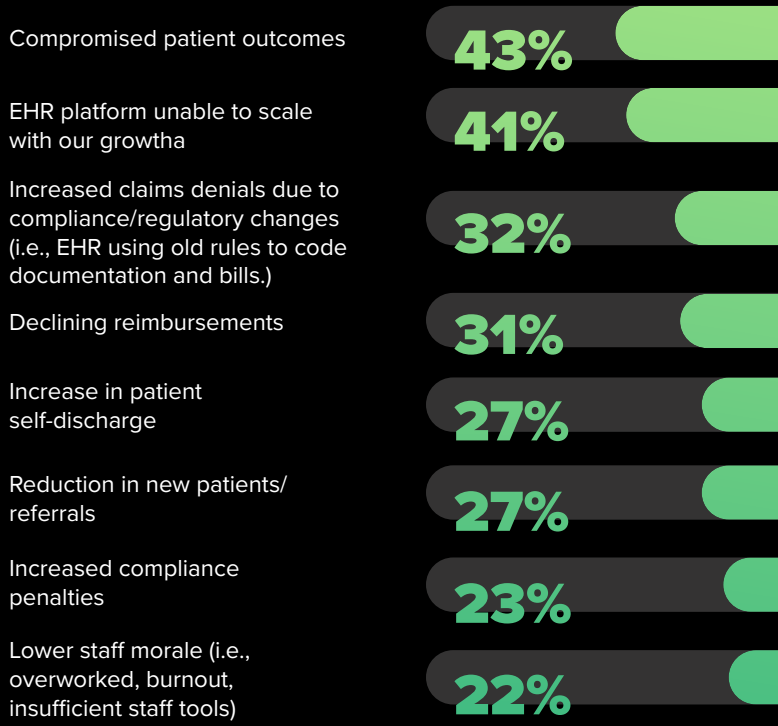
# Failing To Invest In EHR Analytics Will Hurt Patients And The Business

One hundred percent of surveyed rehab leaders said they expect that failing to improve EHR analytics capabilities will damage their practices in numerous ways. The top consequences are important: not investing in improving EHR analytics will compromise patient outcomes, slow growth, and reduce revenue.

Advanced analytics uncover insights that would be otherwise inaccessible or that humans might miss, all to improve outcomes at the point of care. Not enhancing EHR analytics would come at the cost of improved care. Cutting the opportunity to improve care would compromise outcomes, leading to slow growth and less revenue.

With staff burnout such a pressing concern, 22% of surveyed rehab leaders expect that not investing in enhanced EHR capabilities will lead to even lower staff morale.

**“What negative effects do you expect your organization to experience if it does not invest in improving EHR analytics capabilities?”**




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# Enhanced EHR Platforms Must Deliver A Wide Range Of Capabilities

Rehab leaders know a new wave of technology is coming that will change how therapy is provided and businesses operate. Over half of respondents report that all eight of the capabilities discussed in this study are important or critical to future investment. However, the capabilities they need most are tools to improve patient engagement, AI-driven scheduling to improve staff utilization, and generative AI-driven recommendations for more compliant, personalized care.

Patient engagement tools are the most important investment consideration, indicating that the consumerization of healthcare is happening and rehab therapy leaders are responding.

Rehab leaders also need an EHR platform that works between systems and care settings, creates ambient documentation, delivers actionable insights through dashboards, and provides predictive models that optimize referrals and payments.

**“When thinking about investing in an enhanced EHR platform, how important are the following capabilities to your organization?”**

(Showing “Important” and “Critical” responses)




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# Leaders Expect Enhanced EHR Platforms To Dramatically Reshape Organizations

Rehab leaders overwhelmingly expect that investing in an enhanced EHR platform (e.g., predictive analytics, AI-driven automation) will deliver meaningful benefits across their organizations.

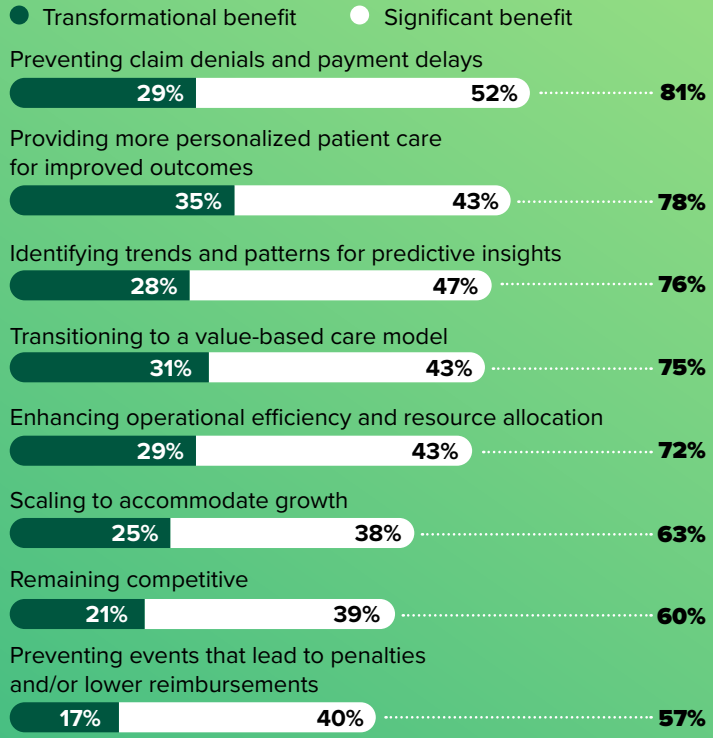
They expect to see the most benefit from an enhanced EHR platform's ability to prevent claim denials and payment delays (81%), provide more personalized care that improves outcomes (78%), and use predictive insights to identify trends (76%).

Enhanced EHR platforms drive increased revenue by improving care and decision-making and impact the bottom line by reducing costs through preventing claims denials and improving operational efficiency, especially as labor costs grow.

Respondents expect enhanced EHR platforms to deliver the most transformational benefit to their patients by improving outcomes due to more personalized care and the practice's ability to transition to a value-based care model.



## "What level of benefit would your organization expect from investing in an enhanced EHR platform?"

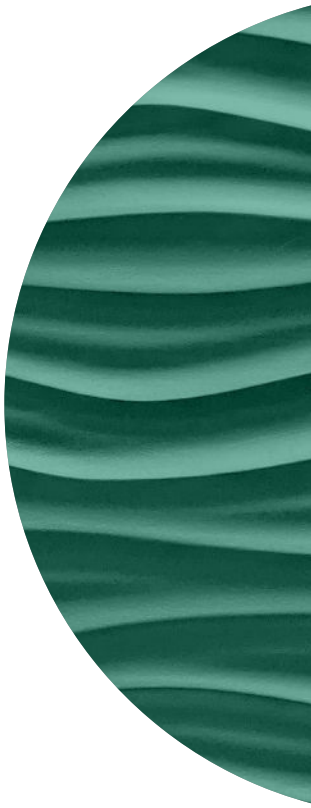



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# Conclusion

A new generation of EHR platforms is how rehab providers deliver care and grow their businesses. In this study, we found that:

- **Enhanced EHR platforms drive growth in many ways.** Predictive analytics and AI-driven automation increase revenue by improving care, identifying trends and patterns, and improving compliance. They also decrease costs by increasing operational efficiency, reducing strain on staff, and preventing claims denials.
- **Growth must be scaled strategically.** However, many EHR platforms don't offer the predictive analytics and reporting that rehab practices need to be competitive in the market.
- **Failing to invest in enhanced EHR platforms hurts patients and the business.** Rehab leaders expect that not investing will compromise patient outcomes, increase claims denials, and lead to declining reimbursements, among other negative effects.



# Resources

**Related Forrester Research:**

"Tech-Led Healthcare Providers Can Transform The Clinician Experience," Forrester Research, Inc., September 14, 2023.

**Related Resources**

Shannon Germain, et al, "Healthcare Ranks Eighth Out Of 10 Industries In Future Fitness," Forrester Blogs.

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**Contributing Research:**

Forrester's Technology and Design research group

## Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Net Health. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of 217 electronic health records (EHR) strategy decision-makers at regional to enterprise-sized private practice rehab, hospital, and contract therapy organizations in the US. The custom survey began in July 2023 and was completed September 2023.

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## Demographics

100% of respondents are leaders at rehab therapy at their organization.

| REGION | |
|---|---|
| North America | **100%** |

| INDUSTRY | |
|---|---|
| Healthcare | **100%** |

| TITLE | |
|---|---|
| C-level | **9%** |
| Partner | **4%** |
| Vice president | **11%** |
| Director | **76%** |

| ORGANIZATION | |
|---|---|
| Contract therapy services | **32%** |
| Hospital | **34%** |
| Rehab therapy private practice | **34%** |

| DIRECTOR FOCUS | |
|---|---|
| Operations | **27%** |
| Rehab Therapy | **20%** |
| Ancillary services | **17%** |
| Clinical | **13%** |
| Office management | **12%** |
| Billing/revenue cycle management | **11%** |

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

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