Fact sheet: HCA's AI Ethics Framework

With the increasing use of AI tools in health care applications, it's crucial to establish guidelines that prioritize trust, privacy, and accountability while maximizing the benefits of these technologies.

The Health Care Authority has developed an AI Ethics Framework to guide responsible use of AI when we or a contractor are dealing with client information.

The framework establishes clear guidelines to safeguard client privacy, trust, and rights. By adopting this ethics framework, HCA aims to ensure the protection of individuals whose data are utilized in AI applications. It allows for a balanced approach to AI utilization, weighing the benefits and risks associated with AI applications and ensuring alignment with ethical principles. Moreover, developing an AI ethics framework enables HCA to comply with regulatory requirements and promotes accountability in AI use, ensuring that AI initiatives meet both legal standards and ethical expectations. Ultimately, this initiative underscores HCA's commitment to responsible AI practices, fostering trust among clients, partners, and the public.

What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a field of developing computers and technology with the capability of behaving in ways that can mimic, and, over time, exceed human capabilities. AI tools are increasingly used in health care for customer service, fraud detection, and improving electronic health records (EHR) interactions.

Concerns around trust, privacy, and accountability have grown with AI's use in health care. Federal and state governments are formulating regulatory approaches and ethical guidelines for AI use.

Purpose of HCA AI Ethics Framework

HCA created the AI Ethics Framework to evaluate proposed AI use cases involving HCA clients' data, ensuring a balanced approach that protects individuals while assessing benefits, costs, and risks.

The framework emphasizes the importance of fairness and mitigating bias in AI systems to ensure equitable distribution of benefits and prevent discrimination. It acknowledges different types of bias, including systemic, human, and statistical biases, and promotes equitable outcomes for all individuals, including those historically marginalized.

Key principles

The framework is guided by principles such as public purpose, safety, validity, fairness, privacy, accountability, transparency, explainability, and interpretability.

When to use the AI Ethics Framework

Essentially, if the use of an AI tool by HCA or our partners involves the use of HCA client data, the AI Ethics Framework must be applied. It's important to note that not every automated decision system falls under the category of AI. AI encompasses technologies that mimic human abilities, including machine learning (ML) which learns autonomously from data.

The framework provides requestors with guidance and information necessary for preparing their requests. The process begins with a request submitted by HCA staff, partners, researchers, or external parties, who should complete the AI Ethics Screening Questionaire, found in the framework document. The request is then routed to the appropriate HCA Data Team staff who support the AI

Ethics Committee. The request undergoes initial discussion and review by the committee, and recommendations from the committee are then routed to the relevant staff for further action.

How it works

Requestors submit AI use requests, which are reviewed by the HCA AI Ethics Committee using screening and assessment questionnaires. The committee will evaluate requests for AI use involving HCA clients' data and provide recommendations or decisions. Recommendations and decisions are routed to relevant HCA staff for further action.

Read the AI Ethics Framework at our website.