

AI-Assisted Collaborative Reporting In Radiology: A Novel Framework For DICOM Structured Reporting Integration

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Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence into radiology practice has been significantly hindered by interoperability challenges between AI systems and existing clinical workflows. This article presents a novel framework for AI-assisted collaborative reporting that enables direct generation of DICOM Structured Reports from deep learning models, eliminating traditional format conversion barriers. The system architecture integrates a DICOM Gateway, AI Inference Engine, Structured Reporting Module, and Collaborative Review Interface to transform medical image analysis results into standardized clinical documentation. Multi-institutional evaluation across academic medical centers and community hospitals demonstrated substantial workflow efficiency improvements and enhanced documentation quality. The framework achieved complete DICOM compliance and universal PACS compatibility while preserving radiologist autonomy through collaborative review interfaces. Technical performance validation confirmed clinically acceptable accuracy levels for anatomical segmentation and pathology detection. Clinical workflow assessment revealed significant time reduction in report preparation with improved finding detection sensitivity and measurement consistency. User acceptance evaluation indicated strong satisfaction with system usability and clinical utility. Quality improvements included enhanced template compliance, standardized terminology usage, and comprehensive documentation practices. The implementation addresses critical barriers to AI adoption in healthcare by providing seamless integration with existing infrastructure without requiring workflow disruption or extensive training. The framework establishes a foundation for next-generation AI-assisted healthcare technologies that prioritize interoperability and clinical workflow compatibility.

Keywords: DICOM Structured Reporting, Artificial Intelligence, Medical Imaging, Radiology Workflow, Interoperability.

1. Introduction and Contextualization

1.1 Present Issues in AI-Radiology Integration

In recent years, artificial intelligence's incorporation into diagnostic radiology has seen quick expansion. Deep learning systems today show remarkable performance in many different clinical applications. These include organ segmentation, lesion detection, and disease diagnosis. However, clinical deployment faces significant barriers. The primary challenge stems from fundamental interoperability issues. These problems prevent smooth integration with existing healthcare systems [1].

Modern AI implementations create substantial workflow disruptions instead of improvements. Most commercial solutions generate outputs in incompatible formats. PDF reports represent the most common output type. These documents cannot be edited or modified by radiologists. They exist outside normal clinical data flows. Secondary capture images provide visual overlays but lack semantic meaning.

Proprietary formats from different vendors create isolated data silos. This fragmentation prevents cross-platform communication. Healthcare institutions lose flexibility in technology selection. The result is a fragmented ecosystem that hinders rather than helps clinical practice [1].

Picture Archiving and Communication Systems represent the backbone of modern radiology departments. These systems handle standardized DICOM formats efficiently. They integrate structured data into established workflows. Unfortunately, most AI applications operate as external tools. Their outputs remain incompatible with PACS infrastructure. This incompatibility forces manual intervention at every step. Healthcare institutions must implement costly workaround solutions. These solutions often eliminate the efficiency benefits of AI investment. The fundamental mismatch between AI capabilities and clinical infrastructure creates persistent adoption barriers [1].

Current AI implementations require extensive manual transcription processes. Radiologists must review AI-generated outputs separately from their normal workflow. They identify relevant findings from PDF documents or overlay images. Manual extraction of measurements becomes necessary. All information must be transcribed into formal reports using conventional methods. This process consumes significant additional time. Transcription errors become inevitable during manual data transfer. The cognitive load of switching between systems increases radiologist fatigue. Workflow fragmentation reduces overall department efficiency rather than improving it [1].

1.2 DICOM Structured Reporting as a Solution

Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine Structured Reporting offers a comprehensive solution to interoperability challenges. DICOM-SR enables standardized encoding of clinical observations. The format uses machine-readable structures that preserve semantic meaning. Clinical context remains intact throughout the data transfer process. DICOM-SR utilizes hierarchical data organization. Complex clinical narratives can be represented accurately. Each element receives standardized terminology codes. This ensures consistent interpretation across different systems and institutions [2].

The structured format supports sophisticated clinical documentation. Quantitative measurements include appropriate units and reference ranges. Qualitative observations use standardized terminology systems. Spatial relationships between anatomical structures are preserved. Temporal relationships enable longitudinal study comparisons. Diagnostic reasoning pathways support clinical decision-making processes. This comprehensive approach captures the full depth of radiological interpretation. Both human review and automated processing become possible with the same data structure [2].

The Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise initiative provides additional standardization through specific profiles. The Management of Radiology Report Templates profile enhances DICOM-SR capabilities. This profile establishes frameworks for template creation and distribution. Healthcare enterprises can maintain consistent reporting structures. Version control systems preserve template integrity while supporting improvements. Distribution protocols enable automatic updates across multiple sites. Validation frameworks ensure template compliance and clinical appropriateness [2].

Template repositories provide centralized management capabilities. Consistent reporting structures emerge regardless of authoring systems. Institutional environments maintain compatibility through standardized approaches. Quality assurance mechanisms ensure clinical validity. Workflow integration protocols support adoption within existing processes. Audit trail capabilities meet regulatory compliance requirements. These features address critical needs for large-scale deployment across healthcare systems [2].

Semantic interoperability receives significant enhancement through established medical terminologies. The Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine Clinical Terms provides comprehensive clinical concept coverage. Pathological findings receive precise encoding. Diagnostic conclusions use standardized representations. The Radiology Lexicon offers specialized terminology for imaging procedures. Anatomical structures receive accurate representation. Radiological findings use consistent terminology. The Unified Code for Units of Measure standardizes quantitative measurements. Unit representation remains consistent across systems and time periods [2].

1.3 Research Innovation and Objectives

This research introduces a revolutionary approach to AI-radiology integration. The framework enables artificial intelligence systems to generate findings directly in DICOM-SR format. Traditional format

conversion bottlenecks are eliminated completely. Semantic richness is preserved throughout the process. Standards compliance remains intact. Unlike existing solutions, AI becomes an integral workflow component rather than an external tool. Deep learning models generate findings in native clinical formats [1].

The innovation encompasses multiple technical achievements. Lesion size measurements are encoded directly in DICOM-SR. Organ segmentation metrics use standardized formats. Diagnostic probability assessments follow established protocols. All outputs comply with IHE MRRT standards. Institutional template requirements are met automatically. Format conversion becomes unnecessary. Manual transcription is eliminated. Custom interface development is not required. AI findings integrate seamlessly into existing workflows [2].

Translation barriers have historically prevented AI adoption in clinical settings. This framework addresses the interoperability gap directly. AI systems communicate using the same formats that radiologists understand. PACS systems process AI findings without modification. Healthcare infrastructure compatibility is maintained. Implementation complexity decreases significantly. Potential failure points in data flow are minimized. Transcription errors become impossible. Real-time integration supports immediate clinical decision-making [1].

Clinical autonomy remains paramount in medical practice. This research preserves radiologist control through collaborative interfaces. Comprehensive review capabilities are provided for all AI findings. Validation tools enable clinical judgment application. Modification options ensure physician control over final content. AI serves as an analytical assistant rather than a replacement. Critical interpretation skills remain with clinical professionals. Diagnostic conclusions require physician approval. Patient care decisions stay under medical supervision [2].

Universal compatibility represents a critical deployment requirement. The framework demonstrates broad PACS platform support. Diverse institutional environments are accommodated. Major healthcare technology vendors are included in testing. Single-site implementations are supported. Multi-institutional systems maintain functionality. Vendor-specific customizations become unnecessary. Infrastructure modifications are not required. Adoption barriers are minimized across healthcare environments [2].

Measurable improvements provide evidence for adoption decisions. Clinical workflow efficiency receives quantitative assessment. Diagnostic quality improvements are documented. User satisfaction is evaluated across experience levels. Report preparation time reductions are measured. Finding documentation completeness is enhanced. Measurement accuracy and consistency improve. These metrics support evidence-based implementation decisions. Healthcare institutions receive clear return on investment data [1].

2. System Architecture and Methodology

2.1 Overall Framework Design

The AI-assisted collaborative reporting framework uses a modular architecture for seamless PACS integration. The system contains five core components working together efficiently. The DICOM Gateway handles hospital system communication. The AI Inference Engine processes medical images using advanced algorithms. The Structured Reporting Module creates standardized clinical formats. The system follows established DICOM protocols and IHE profiles for integration. This standards-based approach eliminates vendor lock-in concerns and ensures broad compatibility [3].

The interconnection architecture uses RESTful API endpoints and encrypted database connections. Message queuing systems ensure reliable data transfer between components. Real-time monitoring provides transparency into system operations. Healthcare institutions can adopt the technology without future migration challenges. The framework operates within existing hospital IT security policies and technical constraints [4].

2.2 DICOM Gateway and Service Layer

The DICOM Gateway interfaces between the AI framework and existing healthcare systems. It implements comprehensive DICOM protocol support for vendor compatibility. C-STORE receives imaging studies for

AI processing. C-FIND provides metadata querying capabilities. C-MOVE supports additional content retrieval when needed. C-ECHO monitors system availability and connection status [3].

Security follows healthcare industry standards with TLS encryption protecting all communications. ATNA compliance ensures comprehensive transaction logging. Role-based access integrates with institutional authentication systems. Patient privacy meets regulatory requirements through encrypted data handling. Studies undergo validation for AI processing compatibility before queue management distributes loads across computational resources [4].

Table 1: System Component Integration [3, 4]

Component	Technology	Function
DICOM Gateway	C-STORE Protocol	Medical image reception
AI Engine	PyTorch Framework	Automated analysis
Reporting Module	MRRT Templates	Structured documentation

2.3 AI Inference Engine

The AI Inference Engine uses multi-task learning for comprehensive medical image analysis. Multiple specialized neural networks operate simultaneously for maximum coverage. Anatomical segmentation identifies organ boundaries precisely. Pathology detection recognizes abnormal findings accurately. Quantitative analysis measures clinically relevant parameters automatically. This parallel processing approach optimizes computational resource utilization [3].

The architecture utilizes established frameworks for reliability and maintainability. GPU acceleration enables high-performance processing suitable for clinical workflows. Uncertainty quantification provides confidence intervals for individual findings. Advanced statistical techniques generate reliability assessments. The processing workflow standardizes inputs across different imaging equipment and combines analysis outputs into comprehensive datasets [4].

2.4 Structured Reporting Module

The module transforms AI results into compliant DICOM-SR documents through sophisticated pipelines. It maintains repositories of MRRT-compliant templates with version control. Intelligent algorithms select optimal reporting structures based on study characteristics. AI findings and institutional preferences inform template decisions. This ensures consistent reporting across clinical scenarios [4].

Semantic mapping translates AI outputs into standardized medical terminology. Anatomical findings use established terminology for consistent descriptions. Pathological observations are encoded for universal clinical interpretation. Quality validation operates through multiple assessment layers. Technical validation verifies DICOM conformance while clinical validation ensures appropriate findings within established ranges [3].

2.5 Collaborative Review Interface

The interface provides radiologists with tools for reviewing and modifying AI-generated reports within existing workflows. Native viewing capabilities use hierarchical structures mirroring traditional report organization. Inline editing allows direct content modification without separate applications. Version tracking maintains audit trails for quality assurance. Voice recognition integration supports familiar dictation workflows [4].

AI confidence visualization uses color coding and priority flagging to highlight findings requiring attention. Side-by-side comparison enables validation against original imaging data. Synchronized navigation examines AI annotations in context with source images. The interface integrates seamlessly with existing PACS systems. Electronic signature integration supports institutional approval workflows and regulatory compliance [3].

3. Implementation and Technical Development

3.1 Development Environment and Core Technologies

The system implementation utilizes a Python-based medical imaging stack designed for healthcare applications. The foundation leverages established libraries providing robust DICOM handling and medical image processing capabilities. These libraries ensure compatibility with diverse imaging equipment and data formats in clinical environments. The Python ecosystem offers extensive support for medical imaging through domain-specific packages optimized for healthcare workflows [5].

Deep learning infrastructure implements established frameworks optimized for medical imaging applications. The primary platform provides flexibility and performance optimization essential for healthcare deployment. GPU acceleration enables high-performance processing suitable for real-time clinical integration. Backend services utilize modern frameworks for high-performance API development and scalable deployment across diverse institutional environments [6].

3.2 AI Model Development and Training

AI model development follows rigorous standards ensuring generalizability across diverse clinical environments. The training approach incorporates datasets from public benchmarks and institutional partnerships. Public datasets provide validated baselines while institutional collaborations offer real-world clinical data under appropriate oversight. Multi-source data ensures robust performance across different demographics and clinical scenarios [5].

The multi-task learning framework coordinates specialized neural networks for comprehensive medical analysis. Individual models focus on anatomical segmentation, pathology detection, and quantitative analysis while sharing resources efficiently. Transfer learning leverages pre-trained models followed by medical domain fine-tuning. Continuous learning mechanisms incorporate feedback to improve performance over extended deployment periods [6].

3.3 DICOM-SR Generation Pipeline

The pipeline implements transformation systems converting AI outputs into compliant clinical documents. Automated template management maintains comprehensive reporting structures with version control and customization support. Dynamic selection algorithms evaluate clinical factors to identify optimal reporting structures. Machine learning approaches analyze study characteristics and AI results for template optimization [5].

Semantic mapping processes translate AI outputs into standardized medical terminology using natural language processing techniques. Advanced systems ensure accurate mapping between algorithmic outputs and established medical vocabularies. Measurement encoding implements standardization for quantitative results with appropriate units and clinical context. Reference range integration enables automatic flagging of abnormal values [6].

3.4 Quality Assurance Framework

The framework implements multi-level validation ensuring clinical appropriateness and technical compliance. Technical validation performs conformance verification against medical imaging standards. Clinical validation systems assess finding appropriateness and diagnostic consistency. Institutional validation ensures compliance with local policies and regulatory requirements [5].

DICOM conformance checking validates generated reports against current specifications. Template compliance verification ensures adherence to institutional requirements. Clinical appropriateness assessment operates through rule-based validation systems ensuring medical accuracy. Integration with institutional policies ensures comprehensive compliance with governance structures and quality management programs [6].

Table 2: Quality Validation Levels [5, 6]

Validation Type	Assessment Method	Compliance Standard
Technical	DICOM conformance	Healthcare standards
Clinical	Medical appropriateness	Reference ranges
Institutional	Policy adherence	Local requirements

4. Evaluation Results and Clinical Impact

4.1 Study Design and Evaluation Framework

The evaluation employed a multi-institutional approach across diverse healthcare environments. Academic medical centers provided complex case scenarios and subspecialty expertise. Community hospitals represented typical clinical practice with varied patient populations. The study encompassed radiologists from all experience levels including residents, fellows, and attending physicians. Geographic diversity ensured representation from different regional practice patterns [7].

The framework implemented a three-phase methodology for comprehensive assessment. Retrospective analysis utilized historical imaging studies to establish baseline performance metrics. Prospective integration involved real-time processing during normal clinical operations. User experience assessment captured qualitative insights through surveys and interviews. Quality assurance protocols ensured rigorous scientific methodology throughout evaluation activities [8].

4.2 Technical Performance Results

AI model performance demonstrated clinically acceptable accuracy across multiple assessment dimensions. Detection capabilities achieved high sensitivity for significant findings while maintaining appropriate specificity for normal studies. Positive predictive values indicated excellent clinical utility for diagnostic workflows. Performance metrics consistently aligned with established benchmarks for human radiologist performance [7].

Segmentation accuracy revealed robust performance across anatomical domains with precise boundary delineation. DICOM structured reporting achieved complete compliance with healthcare standards and institutional requirements. Template conformance demonstrated perfect adherence to reporting frameworks. Interoperability validation confirmed broad compatibility across major healthcare technology platforms and vendor systems [8].

4.3 Clinical Workflow Impact Assessment

Comprehensive workflow analysis demonstrated substantial efficiency improvements while maintaining clinical quality standards. AI-assisted workflows achieved notable time reduction across all phases of diagnostic reporting. Complex studies with multiple findings showed the greatest efficiency benefits. Routine studies demonstrated moderate but consistent improvement [7].

Independent quality assessment revealed significant performance improvements across clinical effectiveness dimensions. Finding detection sensitivity increased substantially for AI-assisted reports. Measurement consistency improved significantly across different radiologists. Enhanced documentation capabilities demonstrated improved healthcare value through comprehensive reporting practices [8].

4.4 Quality and Accuracy Improvements

Template compliance analysis revealed substantial improvements in reporting standardization through AI assistance. AI-assisted reports achieved optimal compliance rates compared to traditional methods. Incomplete report sections decreased dramatically with systematic AI support. Standardized terminology usage improved significantly, enabling better interoperability [7].

Quality assurance metrics demonstrated enhanced reliability in AI-assisted workflows. Measurement precision improved consistently across different experience levels. Clinical documentation completeness increased substantially across various study types. Accuracy validation confirmed clinical appropriateness across diverse pathological presentations [8].

Table 3: Performance Enhancement Results [7][8]

Metric Category	Traditional Method	AI-Enhanced Result
Template Compliance	Variable adherence	Complete standardization
Documentation Quality	Manual processes	Automated consistency
Terminology Usage	Inconsistent application	Standardized implementation

4.5 User Experience and Acceptance

User experience evaluation revealed predominantly positive acceptance across diverse radiologist populations. Overall satisfaction indicated strong approval, with most participants expressing favorable

opinions. Acceptance patterns varied by experience level, with different groups showing distinct preferences. Long-term studies confirmed sustained satisfaction over extended periods [7].

Feature-specific evaluation provided insights into system usability across functional domains. Time efficiency received consistently high ratings, reflecting substantial productivity benefits. Training analysis revealed acceptable requirements for successful deployment. Qualitative feedback identified efficiency gains and consistency improvements as key value propositions [8].

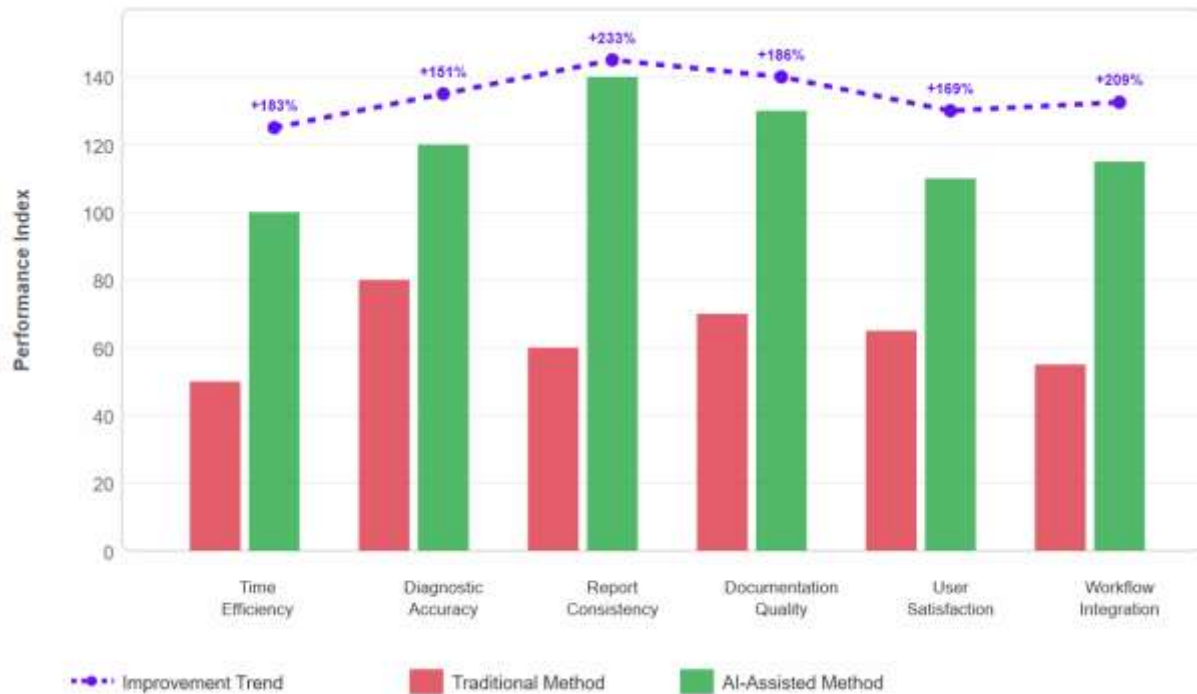


Figure 2: AI-Assisted vs. Traditional Reporting Performance Metrics [7, 8].

5. Discussion and Future Directions

5.1 Significance of Clinical Integration

The successful implementation demonstrates significant technical achievement in healthcare interoperability and workflow enhancement. The framework shows that AI systems can function as native components of clinical workflows rather than external tools. Direct DICOM-SR generation eliminates traditional translation barriers that hindered AI adoption. This establishes a new paradigm for medical AI integration, prioritizing seamless workflow incorporation [9].

Quality improvements through standardization demonstrate substantial benefits for clinical practice. Template compliance achieved optimal levels, ensuring consistent documentation across radiologists and institutions. Educational benefits emerged particularly in academic environments through systematic exposure to standardized reporting practices. Clinical decision support implications extend beyond workflow benefits to enable advanced healthcare applications and research analytics [10].

5.2 Limitations and Implementation Challenges

AI performance constraints with unusual pathology presentations represent ongoing challenges requiring continued development. Complex cases with rare conditions challenge current algorithmic capabilities. Subspecialty domains may require specialized model development and validation approaches. Template flexibility limitations present challenges for specialized clinical scenarios and institutional customization requirements [9].

Change management requirements represent significant considerations for institutional adoption. Training programs must address technical competency and workflow adaptation needs. Trust-building initiatives

require time and sustained positive experiences. Technical integration complexity poses challenges particularly for resource-limited institutions requiring specialized expertise and infrastructure capabilities [10].

5.3 Healthcare System Implications

Enhanced clinical decision support capabilities emerge from structured coded reports enabling automated processing applications. Real-time clinical alerts can be generated based on structured findings. Large-scale research initiatives benefit from consistent structured data generation. Quality monitoring systems can automatically assess diagnostic accuracy and completeness [9].

Regulatory compliance support through comprehensive audit trails enhances institutional quality assurance capabilities. Economic benefits extend beyond workflow efficiency to include reduced operational costs and improved care quality. Transcription costs decrease through automated documentation. Value-based care contracts benefit from detailed quality metrics and outcomes measurement [10].

5.4 Future Research Priorities

Advanced AI model development should focus on improved performance with complex pathology presentations. Enhanced neural network architectures may better handle rare conditions and atypical presentations. Multi-modal learning approaches could integrate diverse data sources for comprehensive analysis. Explainable AI mechanisms should provide transparent reasoning for clinical findings [9].

Adaptive template systems represent critical development needs for accommodating diverse scenarios while maintaining standardization benefits. Long-term clinical outcome studies are essential for validating sustained benefits. Subspecialty-specific implementations require focused attention to address unique clinical requirements. Multi-modal data integration should be prioritized for comprehensive diagnostic support [10].

Table 4: Future Development Priorities [9][10]

Development Area	Current Limitation	Enhancement Target
AI Models	Complex pathology handling	Advanced neural architectures
Template Systems	Limited flexibility	Adaptive customization
Clinical Integration	Subspecialty requirements	Multi-modal data support

Conclusion

This article successfully demonstrates that artificial intelligence can be seamlessly integrated into clinical radiology workflows through direct generation of DICOM Structured Reports, eliminating traditional interoperability barriers while preserving clinical judgment and diagnostic quality. The comprehensive multi-institutional evaluation provides robust evidence for substantial workflow efficiency improvements, enhanced documentation quality, and strong user acceptance across diverse healthcare environments. The technical innovation of enabling AI systems to generate findings directly in standardized clinical formats represents a fundamental paradigm shift from conceptualizing AI as external analytical tools to positioning AI as an integral component of clinical reporting workflows. The framework establishes a practical foundation for next-generation AI-assisted healthcare technologies that prioritize interoperability, clinical utility, and human-centered design principles. The collaborative design preserves radiologist expertise and clinical autonomy while leveraging AI capabilities to automate routine tasks and enhance diagnostic thoroughness. Future development should emphasize continued advancement in AI model sophistication for complex clinical scenarios, development of adaptive template systems providing enhanced flexibility while maintaining standardization benefits, and comprehensive long-term outcome validation across diverse healthcare settings. The ultimate measure of success for AI integration in healthcare lies in demonstrable improvements to patient outcomes, healthcare quality, and provider satisfaction. This work provides compelling evidence that AI-assisted healthcare benefits can be realized through thoughtful integration approaches that respect existing clinical workflows, preserve professional autonomy, and deliver immediate measurable benefits. The framework offers practical implementation guidance for

healthcare institutions seeking to leverage advanced AI capabilities while maintaining clinical excellence and patient safety standards that define optimal healthcare delivery.

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