

Advancing Data-Driven Healthcare Analytics: The Role of Data Quality and Governance at VillageCare



Industry: Healthcare, Insurance

Headquarters: New York City, USA

Interesting Fact: In 1988, VillageCare opened the first-in-the-nation AIDS Adult Day Health Care Program, which served as a model for programs nationwide.

This case study builds on the [VillageCare story](#) published in 2022. That story focuses on the organization's initial Alation implementation and the critical first steps it took to create an organization-wide business lexicon and a single source of truth for its AWS data.

Challenge: Provide high-quality data for healthcare delivery

VillageCare of New York is an innovative not-for-profit organization with deep roots in the provision of long-term care services and support to people in need. VillageCareMAX offers community-based managed care programs for individuals with Medicare and/or Medicaid in the five boroughs of New York City and in Nassau, Putnam, and Westchester counties. VillageCare at 46 and Ten is an Assisted Living Facility serving individuals with a similar profile. They've served underserved and marginalized populations since their founding in 1977 when a community came together to save a nursing home from closure.

Data is critical to all aspects of VillageCare's operations. For example, the clinical team requires accurate and timely data to ensure they can coordinate and arrange for the delivery of health and social services effectively and efficiently.

Business Results



>250%

catalog usage increase in 12 months



4.4K

average monthly Compose queries

Robert Warburton, vice president of data strategy, governance, and reporting at VillageCare, heads the data team responsible for providing data to groups across the organization that require accurate data for operational activity and reporting. “Every decision at VillageCare is focused around some kind of data, so it’s in our best interest to ensure we’re as accurate as we can be.”

In 2022, VillageCare [migrated](#) key datasets to Amazon S3 and Amazon Redshift to overcome a proliferation of redundant data sources and a penchant for siloed reporting. They chose Alation as their data catalog to create a single business lexicon, catalog their metadata, and endorse trusted data. “Alation helped us to establish a single language when sharing data,” says Diana Melnikov, data governance manager at VillageCare. “It ensures that we’re using the same source of truth because now we can say, ‘This data is good.’”

Since then, VillageCare has grown, acquiring several thousand members from another managed care organization. With that growth came more data, more ad hoc Tableau reports, and a greater need to ensure folks were tapping into high-quality data. The organization had previously implemented OwlDQ to perform data quality checks. When the tool was acquired by Collibra, it no longer served its purpose of communicating data quality health to all data users because it didn’t integrate with Alation, which serves as the data community’s single source of truth. Data governance and data quality returned front and center to the organization’s data strategy.

“The whole process of making sure everything is clean and tidy, that we have our metadata in line, and we have all our data quality checks in place is more important than ever because more people are making decisions with data,” says Warburton. “We want to ensure that they have access to the most reliable and accurate data we can provide them.”

Objectives

The data strategy team at VillageCare sought to:

- Improve analyst productivity by putting trusted data at users' fingertips
- Strengthen the data culture within the organization
- Ensure only validated, trustworthy data is used for reporting



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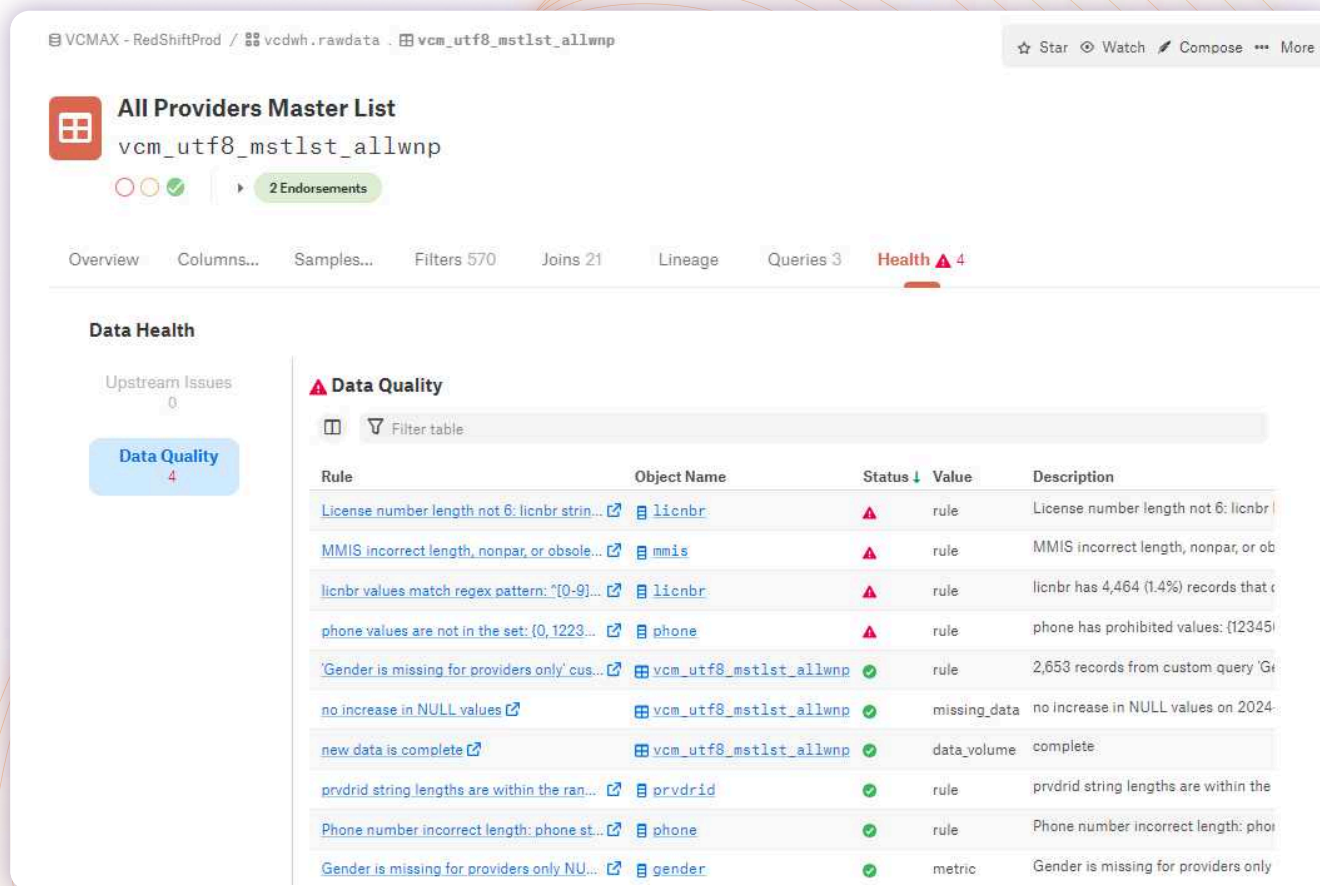
Diana Melnikov
Data Governance Manager, VillageCare

Implementation: Finding trustworthy data with Alation and Anomalo

VillageCare's initial [Alation implementation](#) focused on building a single business lexicon for the organization and cataloging metadata from their AWS data warehouses. "Thanks to Alation, we have a business glossary and all of our data documentation and policies in one place," says Melnikov. Alation also holds an index and catalog of all Tableau reports, reducing ad hoc report creation.

Thanks to Alation's [Open Data Quality Framework](#), finding a data quality solution to integrate with Alation was easy. VillageCare chose the [Anomalo](#) data quality monitoring tool, which integrates seamlessly with Alation so users can see real-time data quality alerts on the Alation home page. "It's very helpful that Alation is linked to Anomalo," says Melnikov. "We don't have to create special licenses because our stewards can just check alerts in Alation against any table, view, or object." Users can also see the rules created in Anomalo for validity, accuracy, and timeliness.

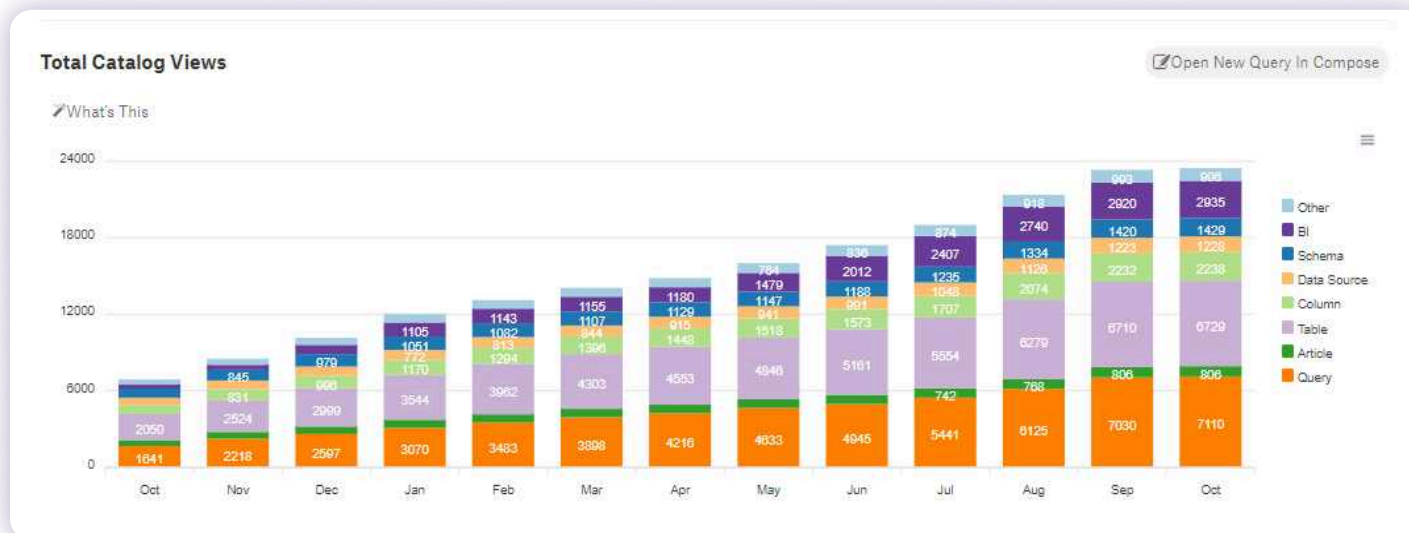
The data strategy team then turned to strengthening the organization's data culture. Leadership and organizational changes meant finding and training new data stewards to build data literacy. VillageCare continually trains new stewards with a "stewards class" through Alation University. "One thing I absolutely love about Alation is Alation University," says Melnikov. "The content is created by very talented people. They have very short, very informative videos. And since I can't tell stewards everything about Alation, I always advise them to go to Alation University or the [Alation Community](#) if they have questions."



Anomalo data quality alerts in the Alation UI efficiently warn people away from data or welcome them to it.

Results: Trusted data enhances healthcare delivery decision-making

VillageCare has seen time savings across the organization as people use Alation to find trusted data for their business needs. “Time is money,” says Melnikov. “But it’s also all about data culture because users now understand that by using Alation they can see whether or not something is a source of truth.” The growth of VillageCare’s data culture is evidenced by a 254% increase in Alation usage in the past year, with an average of 4,400 Compose queries each month. This Intelligent SQL Editor empowers even nontechnical users to query data with ease, helping newcomers self-serve and accelerating time to insight across all departments.



Growth in Alation catalog views reveals growing data culture maturity at VillageCare

A dynamic platform, Alation continues to add functionality to help users become more productive. “Alation is a great product and I love seeing the progress in new features,” says Melnikov. “The new lineage tool is more user-friendly and functional, which is great. And what I really love is ALLIE, the AI feature that provides suggested descriptions. I think that this is just great.” ALLIE AI auto-generates asset descriptions for stewards to verify, streamlining stewardship and supporting superior self-service.

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VillageCare’s adoption of Anomalo marks a turning point in its data governance strategy. After moving from Collibra’s OwlDQ, the team saw immediate results through seamless integration with Alation. Thanks to the [integration of Alation and Anomalo](#), stewards not only receive data quality alerts but can see them right in the Alation interface. This eliminates the need for multiple tools or complex workflows, further improving productivity and building trust in the data. “With OwlDQ, the rules were created in and accessed from Tableau dashboards linked to OwlDQ,” says Melnikov. “With Anomalo alerts in Alation, users don’t have to access any other tool. So it’s much more elegant and more efficient.”

By implementing Anomalo’s AI-powered checks, VillageCare can be proactive instead of reactive to data quality issues. Now, with Anomalo alerts being integrated into ServiceNow, their automated IT ticketing platform, the data team hopes to streamline issue resolution among data stewards across VillageCare, further democratizing data ownership. The integration of Anomalo and Alation is helping VillageCare make better data-driven decisions, ensuring data is used to enhance the delivery of timely, reliable, and impactful services and support to VillageCareMAX’s more than 36,000 members.

About VillageCare

VillageCare of New York is a highly regarded, New York State not-for-profit organization, known for its commitment to the provision of services and support to vulnerable people and populations. VillageCare has, through its various programs and services, established itself as an organization uniquely capable of serving as a provider of high-quality services and support for older adults, persons living with HIV/AIDS, and other individuals in need of rehabilitation, long-term care and related health care services. Today, VillageCare's community-based services are provided primarily through VillageCareMAX, a managed care plan offering both Medicaid and Medicare programs, and VillageCare at 46 and Ten, an Assisted Living Program (ALP) offering residential services and support. VillageCare's programs and services have been designed to address a wide range of health and related psychosocial needs, including mental health needs, substance use disorders, and certain factors that may serve as barriers to an individual's ability to access needed health care and/or related services to ensure an individual's ability to move forward on a path to better health and well-being. VillageCare's mission is simple and straightforward: ***"To promote healing, better health and well-being to the fullest extent possible."***

Data Environment:

