

# Right-sized and effective governance for industry alliances

Innovation yields much more than just technologies. The heart of innovation is finding new ways – and often times new partners for collaboration, which can lead to surprising outcomes. Born from the necessity to solve mutual challenges in managing health care data across complex networks spanning the industry, the Synaptic Health Alliance brings together stakeholders with varying interests so that everyone can benefit. A goal of the Synaptic Health Alliance is to build a utility that benefits the entire health care system. Our common capabilities are intended to be functions that support mutually beneficial use cases.

A critical success factor for any alliance is a thoughtful and effective governance structure. Governance provides the framework for strategic direction setting, decision-making and collaborative execution.

## **Broad mix of membership**

The Synaptic Health Alliance is unique in its member composition. The founding members, Aetna, Humana, MultiPlan, Quest Diagnostics and UnitedHealth Group, represent a mix of health care industry leaders with a national footprint. They formed the Alliance to explore the use of blockchain technology in tackling some of the industry's toughest challenges, focusing first on efficient maintenance of provider directories.

In early 2020, the Alliance added five new members, helping bring key technical expertise, data expansion and patient/consumer insights to support the Alliance as it explores new use cases for blockchain technology. The new members include Centene, Cognizant, CorVel, Prime Health Services and Providence.

As the Alliance investigates additional use cases, it plans to invite industry players who can contribute to the solution development and broaden the usage of the utility.





## Governance Structure

Synaptic Health Alliance’s governance structure has evolved over time and is based on industry best practices as well as hands-on learnings as to what actually works to facilitate effective collaboration. The Alliance realized early on that each of its members have different ways of operating internally – this created the need to put in place a right-sized governance and team structure that facilitated consensus building and decision making without hindering progress and speed to action.

Specific member types bring certain strengths to the Alliance and have related critical responsibilities. Founding and Board members define the strategic direction, monitor governance, financial and execution status of the Alliance and review and approve new member applications. The Alliance also allows for the invitation and addition of Advisory members and Services members who can bring a specific niche expertise, experience and/or solution to support the goal of the Alliance.



## Project Management

The Alliance’s Project Management Office, consisting of the Product Owner and Program Manager, provide overall guidance and direction to all the other Alliance Teams. The Product Owner is responsible for developing and communicating the Alliance product vision and roadmap, ensuring strong alignment between the technical and business capabilities being built into the utility and onboarding new members. The Program Manager is charged with ensuring successful execution and completion of all the Alliance projects. Primary responsibilities include monitoring and reporting on all Alliance team and project deliverables, milestones, issues and risks.

## Alliance Organization

Since its inception, the Alliance has identified the need for and setup the following teams to ensure adequate oversight and effective execution of its projects and activities. Each of these teams have well defined and documented scopes of authority, responsibilities, policies and processes.

Any member can propose a new Alliance project and they all provide resources to contribute to the success of project. Resources can include staff, data, technology and other expertise.

There is no one-size-fits-all governance playbook. Alliances require clear governance structures to ensure deep collaboration, strong oversight and effective decision making. Clear-cut processes, policies and program management elements are critical, but so too is flexibility for each of those to develop over time as the nature and work of the Alliance evolves.



To learn more about the Synaptic Health Alliance, visit [synaptichealthalliance.com](http://synaptichealthalliance.com)