

VA Online Scheduling User Research: VA and Community Care Requests

September 6-10, 2019

Research Questions

1. RQ1: How does our strategy of “only showing Veterans options that they have” work within VAOS work w/r/t user flow?
2. RQ2: Are users aware of VAOS?
3. RQ3: What is the user’s “goal” or “mental process” for scheduling an appointment?
4. RQ4: Do the new user interface components introduce any pain points or confusion?
5. RQ5: What content is needed to facilitate decision support at key moments in the appointment scheduling process?

Who We Talked To:

VAOS Home Page

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VA Appointments

Get started



Create a new appointment

Create a new appointment at a VA Medical center, clinic, or Community Care facility



Manage your appointments

View confirmed, pending, or past appointments



Quotations

- “You can make an appointment and or confirm, cancel an appointment and see your history of previous appointments... You would be able to confirm, there are many of options, call, text or this app to confirm that you will be at your appointments and see your previous appointments as well.” - P2
- “I can look at my upcoming appointments, see if I need to reschedule/cancel an appointment or set up a reminder for appointments. You can probably see when you have gone to the doctor and if you are awaiting on a referral.” -P5
- “I should be able to confirm what I have, cancel what I have. See the total of appointments I have had.” -P6
- “I don’t see where you can change an appointment/reschedule.” -p7
- “This is what I was refereeing to manage the appointments is where you can see your appointments if it is a week or 6 months down the road then a new appointment for something you need.” -P10
- “If you want to cancel it would be in manage appointments, everything I see is there. Once it is created it would go to management as well as reschedule. Everything is there.” -P11

Observations

1. The concept of “manage” was clear to # of # users. # of # users wanted the help text to specifically state “cancel”.
2. Users expect to be able to access all appointment types, past and future, in the manage section.
3. Some users were interested in a reschedule or change appointment option.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Clarify help text under “manage” appointments to include “cancel”.
2. If appointments include both VA and community care appointment types, confirm what header should say.

Confirm your address



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NEW APPOINTMENT

Confirm your address

Your current residential address on file at VA is listed below. We use this information to identify appointment options for you. If the address listed below is incorrect, you may change it on your profile on VA.gov.

Your current residential address

36 State Street
Salt Lake City, Utah
84148

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Quotations

- “I guess for the confirmation within the mail that the appointment is set, they need the correct address, so it gets to me. I just thought of the location as well because with VA choice they would ask what area of town I wanted my appointment in so that’s another reason why it is important... It makes sense to have that part of the process.” - P2
- “Not surprised because when anyone logs in, this is for me, after the username and passcode that you change five times before getting it right, I don’t look up there I just try to get on to the next thing I have to do. I wouldn’t go there so if I see confirm address and knew I had to change it; this would be my notification.” - P5
- “It is always good to confirm because people move. “ -P10
- “So, they can communicate and have information to identify me. That’s me and my residence so I can get appointment letters, confirmation or medication sent to me.” -P11

Observations

1. # out of # users expected to see their address as part of this flow.
2. Users expect that a modal will pop up so they can make these changes inline.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Many users did not read the secondary help text. Review page title to determine if we can make this clearer.
2. Further discovery is needed with Dave Mazik and the API team to determine if we can confirm this address and have it quickly map to the latitude and longitude codes needed to determine drive time.

Provider or Type of Care



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NEW APPOINTMENT

Choose how you would like to make an appointment

☐ **Provider**

Choose a VA doctor or care team.

☐ **Type of care**

Choose a specific type of care, like audiology or primary care. This option includes community care.

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Quotations

- PROVIDER: “There is always a list of different people within the message center that are within your individual care. Before they used to call it colors and the list of doctors that could take care of the Veteran.” - P2
- “No Okay it says provider, I am saying this because my friend goes to 5 different clinics for his issues. If I were able to select provider would I be able to see all current providers that I am currently seeing.” - P5
- “Provider would probably, I guess give me options for the hospitals or facilities I want to go to with the providers I have been to in the past to book an appointment with.” -P6
- PROVIDER: “I would say if you already knew who your doctor is or have seen them before and want to stick with the same doctor or the same location. “ -P10
- TYPE OF CARE: “I would assume it is a specialty, I don’t believe as a veteran this is something we can do without the direct referral from the primary care. I know who my doctors are and if I wanted an appointment I would choose my doctor.”- P2
- “Type of care would be exactly what is wrong like your foot, leg , heart, ears, hands” -P7
- “I would only do type of care if I had a referral for a specialist.” -P9
- “Type of care would give me the types of clinics.” -P6
- TYPE OF CARE: “Like I said if you need the specialty care, it breaks it down for what you need and will provide a list of options in case you don’t already have a doctor. “ -P10


Observations

1. Users are very used to their primary care doctors at VA being their primary access point to other types of care. As such, many associated “primary care” with “provider” and “specialty care” with “type of care”.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Help text can be improved to help users make the selection between provider and type of care.
2. We may want to consider an alternate name for “type of care” to better reflect the inclusivity of primary care.

Type of Care Selection



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NEW APPOINTMENT

Choose the type of care you need

Primary care

Including PAC Team, express care clinic, and primary care appointments with clinical pharmacists.

- ☐ Primary care
- ☐ Express care clinic
- ☐ Clinical pharmacy primary care

Mental and behavioral health

Including outpatient mental health and social services

- ☐ Outpatient mental health
- ☐ Social work

Specialty care

Including hearing aid support and some other types of specialty care

- ☐ Amputation care
- ☐ Audiology and speech
- ☐ CPAP clinic
- ☐ MOVE! weight management program
- ☐ Nutrition and food
- ☐ Ophthalmology
- ☐ Optometry
- ☐ Podiatry
- ☐ Sleep medicine and home sleep testing

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Quotations

“When it says clinical pharmacy I think it has to deal with long term medical care such as radiation. That would be what I think when it says clinic, but it also makes me think of clinical studies. Like is the VA doing studies on certain medication? ... Really easy just put ‘pharmacist’, simplifies it for me.” -P5

“I would think so and I see where people would get confused, just put mental health. Outpatient isn’t on anything else. I don’t see difference with inpatient or outpatient for mental health. I rarely think outpatient when I think mental health.” - P5

“I know my primary care would do a referral, but I don’t see anything here to do that. If I wanted to request that type of appointment it is not in there.” -P9

“It is self-explanatory, it breaks it down with the type of care and under the main category. It is pretty simple to me as long as you know what the terms mean.” -P10

Observations

1. Some types of care were unfamiliar to Veterans.
2. # of # Veterans initially thought that all of their types of care were on the screen, but then identified several specialties that are not.
3. # of # users understood why not all specialties could be scheduled online. Some expected to be able to request that type of appointment anyway, particularly if they had a referral.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Update the names of care to match the taxonomy.
2. Care types need the patient friendly explanation from the taxonomy list. (Amputation care, ophthalmology, express care, etc.)
3. Remove Express Care from this list for now. If we re-instate this, we need to rename it to explain that it is same-day video visit primary care.
4. Due to the logic around express care (must have PAC Team, video visits enabled, etc.) we may want to consider putting it elsewhere in the flow.
5. CPAP could be nested under sleep medicine, either on this page, or in the treatment we give audiology.

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NEW APPOINTMENT

Choose where you would prefer to receive your care

You are eligible to see either a VA provider or community care provider for this type of service.

- ☐ **VA medical center or clinic**
Go to a VA medical center or clinic for this appointment
- ☐ **Community care facility**
Go to a community care facility near your home.

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Quotations

- “Community care means offsite locations where you can seek medical attention without going to the facility...Okay, I have used VA choice for appts that are 90 day choice to go to a doctor in the private sector to be seen...Community care – it is known as VA CHOICE” -p2
- “I understand that [community care] is dealing with people that are in a remote area without a VA facility available to them. Certain mileage for an appointment, they would go to a community care center to be taken care of. Mission Act- was that the one that gave everyone the va choice? I have heard of them before but having an issue knowing which is which... VA choice program is what I think when I hear VA community care.” -P5
- “I would assume yes [I am eligible for community care] because one it is clicked and click community center it will tell me that they have it within my area. If they don’t have it in my area I don’t think that the community care button should be there.” -P5
- “Community care can be anything from someone signing up and offering community care to working with the team that handles community care from the VA. I believe it is provided within the VA, not in the facility but in another office.” -P6
- “Mission Act, how much time do we have. It is a replacement program that allows, initially to open the pharmacy for urgent care and ER’s.”-P6
- “I am eligible [for community care] because the option is on the screen. I am assuming that the screen is tied into my records.” -P9
- “I’m given this choice because it matters to me where I would like this to be done for my convenience. They are trying to give me choices of where I can have my appointment.” -P10
- “Community care is where you can go to a civilian doctor. I really don’t know for sure. Community care would be going outside of the VA.” -P11
- “I know there is one community care facility that’s close to me in GA, and I am not 100 percent sure what it is. I think it is shared facilities that the VA uses with the hospital. The one close to me is the va community care facility that’s why I guess that it shares it facility with veterans for appointments.” -P10
- “I would choose VA because I do all of my care at the VA. I know some veterans believe care is better outside of the VA, I just know my doctors and a doctor is a doctor. I am not convinced that they are better on the outside... I am not ready to run around to see where I need to do. It is easy to locate where I need to go at the VA. I don’t have to figure out where I am headed, where it is located.” -P7

Observations

1. # of # Veterans are unsure what community care is, or are still referring to it as CHOICE. The concept is not yet well understood, and the naming convention does not make sense to many people Consider calling it something else, such as “VA-sponsored private health care.”
2. Community care is occasionally confused with VA community clinics or facilities versus the main hospitals.
3. # of # users did not read the subtext that explained eligibility.
4. # of # users wanted to know availability of appointments at this stage in order to make a choice. This will not be information we can provide immediately.
5. # of # users wanted to know where the facilities were at this stage to make a decision about what to choose.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Consider renaming “community care” to facilitate comprehension, OR add help text under “community care” to help Veterans understand what it is.
2. Need to update subtitle or help text to make it clearer that if a user sees this page, they are eligible to get that type of care via community care.
3. Future technical discovery wish list: Can we indicate how quickly a Veteran could get an appointment at one or the other when making a choice on this page?

Audiology



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NEW APPOINTMENT

Choose the type of audiology care you need

☐ **Routine hearing exam**

This includes an office visit for a hearing exam and an evaluation using non-invasive tests to check your hearing and inner ear health. A routine exam is not meant for any new or sudden changes with your hearing or ears.

☐ **Hearing aid support**

This includes an office visit for Veterans who already have a hearing aid and need assistance with this device. This visit is for troubleshooting or adjusting a hearing aid to improve performance. A hearing aid support visit is not for initial evaluation to obtain a hearing aid.

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Quotations

“I would assume these are the choices unless something else was discovered during the exam.” -P9

“I guess there are two different types of audiology that supports veterans. Does it check your ears or is it for someone that already has hearing aids.” -P10

Observations

1. # of # users found this page intuitive and did not have any questions.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. No content changes needed besides basic editing.

Choose VA location



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NEW APPOINTMENT

Choose a VA location for your appointment

You are registered at the following VA health systems. Select where you would like to have your appointment.

- ☐ VA Central Texas
- ☒ VA Salt Lake City
- ☐ VA Bay Pines

Primary care appointments are available at the following locations. Some types of care are only available at one location. Select your preferred location.

- ☒ George E. Whalen VA Medical Center

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Quotations

- “This is asking whether or not you want it at the main facility or the satellite facility. I think why this has different states I don’t know what VA bay Pines is. This is directed at the Veteran so they should know the location in which you live so why is there a different state.” -P2
- “Those are the ones within the area that is expectable for travel for the VA. Or it is past VA’s I have visited. I know looking at these three, why in the heck would I have them? Texas and Salt Lake is a lot of distance. Is he going to fly or drive 8 hours for an appointment. I would expect it to be within an acceptable driving difference.” -P5
- “If there was a way for the system to know my main care is in X city, and I am traveling at this place a routine follow up would not come up. If I am in X City why I am getting the Salt Lake option. How does it recognize that I am not in city redacted?” -P6.
- “If you’re only registered in one VA it would automatically come up with the hospital.” -p9
- “Based on this screen, I am not [eligible for community care] because I have not been made aware of it and not 50 miles away from it. -P9
- “I guess there are multiple sites near you or generates the location where you are. Just make sure that you are not setting an appointment to where you are not close to.” -P10

Observations

1. Most users missed the help text under the title that stated that they were registered at more than one location.
2. Users were not clear that if they saw this page after type of care, that it meant that they were not eligible to get that type of care from the community.
3. Some users assumed that they would be given more options for VAs if they are traveling in the area and needed care. They assumed the system would be smart enough to know where they were and offer alternative VA options. They also thought they might be able to access community care this way.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. The VA system will not show if a Veteran is only registered at one location. They will only have the choice of facilities that offer that type of care.
2. IF a Veteran IS registered in more than one system, the content needs to be clearer to help Veterans understand this and select the right system for their appointment.
3. If a Veteran is seeing this page they may NOT be eligible for community care for the selected type of care. In the spirit of not presenting Veterans with options they don’t have, would rather NOT bring that up on this page.

Reason for appointment



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NEW APPOINTMENT

Why do you want to make an appointment?

- ☐ Routine/Follow-up
- ☐ New issue
- ☐ Medication concern

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Quotations

“If it is something new that is happen that’s why they would want to know that it is new, and medication concerns if you have questions about your health and how to take it are concerns that would need to be addressed sooner.” -P2

“That is self-explanatory.” -P5

“Routine is set but a new issue or medication would open another door. I would do medication on secure messaging which I do. I would do it in secure messaging then they would tell me what to do. “ -p9

Observations

1. This page content was intuitive to most users.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Most users understood what each type was meant for, but there may be opportunities to provide further detail on when each type should be used, similar to what we did on the audiology page.
2. This may also be an opportunity to nudge users to use secure messaging for medication concerns.

Care format

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NEW APPOINTMENT

How would you like to be seen?

- ☒ Office visit
- ☐ Phone call
- ☐ Telehealth

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Quotations

“I don’t know what telehealth is, but office visits and phone call is self-explanatory. I didn’t think they would call you. I don’t get it, do nurses and doctors call to give medical advice over the phone? If you don’t have a good relationship with the doctor I don’t think you would want to be diagnosed over the phone and I don’t know what telehealth is...Video visit- okay so it’s like computers where they can see you and you can see them. I would like that.” -P2

“I would assume my provider offers all three if they are listed on there.” -p5

“I would [consider telehealth] if it is something that the doctor does not need to see. A routine medical appointment like a referral I would rather a telehealth instead of going in. If it is a lump they would need to see it. I would not want the doctor to look through telehealth. Those are the things I would want on there. The phone I would understand why it is there, but I don’t know what it is for.” -P5

“Well I would expect to have the information through email or text to link or download the app or have it on my phone within the program. I pick up my iPhone and hit telehealth or open the website for telehealth then it connects me.. Doctor picks up and I’m there.” -P6

Observations

1. Telehealth was a new concept to # of # users, while # of # users recognized it or had used it before.
2. # of # users would be open to telehealth if their provider recommended it. It may be worth further discovery in the future to see if we could surface a nudge here.
3. Some users were not sure when they would use VAOS for requesting a phone call appointment.
4. Some users expect to be able to initiate a telehealth appointment or join a telehealth appointment via FaceTime.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. “Video visit” may be a better word for telehealth. Telehealth needs better explanation.
2. The options on this page could use additional explanation with advice on when to use each. See audiology page as an example.
3. The telehealth and phone call options SHOULD only show if a provider offers those types of care. It may mean that the page does not show at all if a provider only offers office visits.
4. This page may be a place to surface express care in the future, should a provider offer that format.

Date selection comparison

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NEW APPOINTMENT

Tell us your preferred dates for your appointment

You may choose up to three dates. A scheduling clerk will contact you to coordinate the best time for you.

Preferred date

Month Day Year

☐ AM ☐ PM

Alternative date (optional)

Month Day Year

☐ AM ☐ PM

Alternative date (optional)

Month Day Year

☐ AM ☐ PM

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NEW APPOINTMENT

Tell us your preferred dates for your appointment

You may choose up to three dates. A scheduling clerk will contact you to coordinate the best time for you.

September

M	T	W	Th	F
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

October

M	T	W	Th	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

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Observations

1. # of # users preferred the calendar to the dropdown.
2. Users found the calendar format intuitive, including advancing months.
3. # of # users wanted to be able to specify AM / PM on the calendar as well if they could not further specify time.
4. # of # users wanted to be able to see availability on the calendar.

Quotations

DROPDOWN

- Re Dropdown: “I don’t like the drop down for the month/date/year. I would prefer the calendar of the month of September. I would like to see the calendar that should you the available appointments and pick it that way instead of the dropdown. If you told me to pick I would pick 4 days from now. I have my sight set on September 15th, see what I’m getting at?” - P5
- Re: Dropdown: “It may be nice if it was a calendar option to look at it. Maybe have it off to the right and then click on the date of the calendar. I think it would be quicker, if I can assess that and scroll through the months. Normally it will be within 60-90 days and we live in a 30 day month so I would be able to scroll through and click on that. Scroll to a different month and click on the date and it would auto load instead of having to do the drop down menus. “ -p6
- “Well first, for me it would be what is convenient for my work schedule, so I don’t miss any hours. I try to make it so that I am an hour late or that right after work. Like before 8am or after 3pm. I like mornings better then evening to miss rush hour. Maybe I could leave an hour earlier.” -P10


CALENDAR

- Re: Calendar. “I like this one better because it not only tells you the date but the day of the week... “Well unless the next screen has times I would prefer to see that was well. I would assume it would all be on one screen but if it is on the next that’s fine. ” - P2
- Re: Calendar: “That is exactly the screen I envisioned on the projected dates. Monday through Friday, I would expect that September 10th would be gone because its past. Then you have next month. I think that is what we should have.” -P5
- Re Calendar: “No this is actually what I was talking about before when setting an appointment. Have a link for this month that has available appointments. It is easy and you don’t have to do a drop down. No issues with click the wrong year. Here you are just clicking a button. I would probably have a line through the other dates, if I just clicked the dates I may accidentally unclick it. Will that cancel the option, or enter the date as an alternate? If I can’t see and am struggling that I clicked the 17 and accidentally click on the 24th then what have I done. I think that is when people get frustrated.If it is not blocked off they are going to click them or have them fade. We have buttons that fade it and won’t allow them to highlight it. Everything else would be faded to see that you did not pick this.” -P6
- Re: Calendar: “This is probably easier for some folks. Either one is good for me. A scheduling clerk would contact you to see the best time. It would be good if I can click on the date and it brings up times. See time on screen to reference specific or schedule appointment- If I click on the 16th and it came to a drop down time available ad I clicked on the time. I would secure that appointment and it would be confirmed.” -P10
- Re: calendar “It is easier visually. I guess it can go rather to have it color coded for what is open an what is closed. Like baseball when you go onto Ticketmaster to assist you in knowing what is open and what isn’t, instead of waiting for a response so you already know. Then it can be confirmed instead of requested.” -P10

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. The calendar format was more intuitive than the dropdown format. Use this for both requests and self-scheduling.
2. Add the AM/PM specification for requests when a user selects a date.
3. It was not always obvious to users on this page that they were only requesting an appointment, not specifically scheduling one. If we are going to use the calendar, make sure title and helper text is very clear that these are PREFERRED dates, but that someone will be following up with them to schedule a time.
4. Figure out interaction once user has selected 3 options and what happens on unselect.

Share community care provider preferences - name



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NEW APPOINTMENT

Share your community care provider preferences

Do you have a preferred community care audiology provider? You may specify up to three providers.

☒ Yes

☐ No, I don't know

Practice Name (optional)

First name

Last name

Mailing Address 1

Mailing Address 2 (optional)

City

State

Zip

+ Add another provider

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Quotations

- “I would like google it. I have a list and I know who my providers are so I could put their information and the location of them. I would go through my records and place the information that is required..” -P2
- “I understand the mailing address but why isn’t the phone number there? I would have everything available beside the mailing address. And the first name and last name of the doctor. I see that some people know where they go but not what the doctors name is.” -p5
- “Does it save the name to the community provider? I would expect it to, so I don’t have to enter it again. If I go in and pick community care, I should be able to pick Dr.Jones for audiology or put someone else in if I went that route. Yes, I would think it would auto populate then I should be able to pick it. If I have an audiologist and if it is asking me to add it why would it not save? I would want it to auto populate then I could go to ABC and it could go to that file and it would already be loaded in va.gov. It doesn’t look like it is coming from the main site, so I don’t know where it is. Common sense tells me that it should not ask me for another provider unless it populates the one I have entered prior.” -p6
- “If you can see if the doctor is approved for community care, if was there it would save a lot of time.” -P10
- “I would go normally by referral, a lot of my family is in the medical field, so I take their advice or friends and there is a website that rates the doctors in your area depending on what you have. I haven’t had to use it for about 2 years.” -P10

Observations

1. # of # users asked for a list of providers.
2. None of the users would have more than 1 name and would likely need to google for results.
3. Some users were interested in being able to autopopulate details if they have used a community care provider in the past. This begs the question of whether a user would come back to VAOS to rebook a community care provider, or if they would just go straight to that provider.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Change content to give users the options of “no name provided”; “I have a referral”; or “find a provider near me.”
2. Only one name is needed. Users do not know more than 1.
3. Include practice name, doctor name, city, state, phone number if we do provide fields; these are the ones that users are likely to have.
4. Do technical discovery to determine if we can surface 3 providers from the community care API in a future iteration.
5. Consider if we can put all of the community care provider preferences on one page.

Distance and language community care provider

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NEW APPOINTMENT

Share your community care provider preferences (2/2)

How many miles are you willing to travel for an appointment?

- ☐ Up to 25 miles
- ☐ 25 to 50 miles
- ☐ Farther than 50 miles

Select your preferred language

- Select -

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Quotations

- “It is making it better for the individual on the other end to determine how many miles, like VA choice you have to be 40 miles from the VA to qualify, so I don’t really know. I will assume if I want the least number of miles away from my home I could pick that.” -P2
- “It is simplest it is the radius screen. I would obviously pick the closest one. In fact, let’s be honest, I don’t see anyone else picking 25-50 or farther then 50 miles. I would say instead that you are willing to travel. This is the best way to say it.” -P5
- “What is funny is the further than 50 miles. That option is not needed. If it is 30 days and longer then 40 miles, and if it is further then 50 miles why are we using Mission because there are VA facilities to use?The highest would be the limit for the Mission. I don’t know what that is off the top of my head.” -P6
- “It would have to be under 25 miles because I don’t drive so the closer the better.” -P9
- “Because I know about it I would put 25 miles because the closest va facility is about 35 miles.” -P10

Observations

1. Most users wanted the closest option. The further options are not of interest because beyond the community care distance, they would just go to VA.
2. # of # users found the language option helpful.

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. If we are able to provide a list of names from the community care API, we may not need to include this distance question.
2. It may be more useful to provide users with a space to explain limitations or a “Special requirements” question on distance for travel (e.g. “I don’t drive” or “I cannot drive far”) to help schedulers.

Comparison of communication preferences



[Home](#) > VA Appointments

NEW APPOINTMENT

Appointment confirmation and communication preferences

Provide an email address, so that we may contact you about your appointment and provide additional details as needed. Email will be the primary way we communicate with you about this appointment.

Email address

You can opt in to receive appointment notifications and updates, such as status changes or appointment reminders. You may also opt to speak with a scheduling clerk about this request. If you would like VA to communicate with you by phone about this appointment request, enter your phone number below.

Phone number

Notification preferences (select all that apply)

- ☒ Email notifications
- ☐ Text-based notifications and reminders
- ☒ Phone call (if you have specific questions for the scheduling clerk)

Best times for VA to call:

- ☐ Morning (8 a.m. - noon EST)
- ☐ Afternoon (noon - 4 p.m. EST)
- ☒ Evening (4 p.m. - 8 p.m. EST)

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[Home](#) > VA Appointments

NEW APPOINTMENT

Where can we call you to confirm your appointment?

A scheduling clerk will contact you to coordinate an appointment date.

Phone number

Best times for VA to call:

- ☐ Morning (8 a.m. to noon EST)
- ☐ Afternoon (noon - 4 p.m. EST)
- ☐ Evening (4 p.m. - 8 p.m. EST)

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Observations

1. Users expect that VA will pre-populate this information if it is on file, and then they can edit it if need be.
2. Veterans are very interested in the text option because it allows them to "save" it in their phone for easy access. This is also helpful for users with memory issues, as they do not need to remember to look up an email.

Quotations

- “Prefer both text and email, not phone. Ill be honest most of the time when I see a number that is not in my contact is normally a robo call or a telemarketer so I don’t use the phone and would rather the text. I am not like blind and let it go to voicemail.” -p5
- “I would expect that the email on files to be there and expect us to be able to change it. I would expect to be able to click and edit the number then have the option to save number for future use or account.” - p5
- “The thing I notice is that it is all electronic...I would probably choose text. Email is horrible, and I don’t need any calls. Vetttext is nice but has a few bugs still. I can text and say yes to opt in and if I don’t want to receive text I can send stop to opt out.” -p6
- “I would prefer everything to come by email or text. Text I respond to right away and my phone notifies me when I get an email. The record is there, and I can screenshot and transfer where it needs to go.” -P9
- “If it is initially connect to my file [phone number] should already be filled in.” -p10
- “Email or text. Because I can read that at any time, and I am not always able to answer a phone call. I get all communications through text or email. All notifications right there and can do that without distracting others. Text messages just stay there.” -P10
- “I would expect [va] to have [my contact information]. I could see then having an edit button if they don’t have the correct email on file.” -P10

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Pre-populate phone and email if possible.
2. Edit title and page content for the phone and email option.
3. Use the option with phone, text, and email. Will likely need to exclude text for MVP.
4. Do technical discovery with Clarice to see if we can get VAOS into her notification pilot.
5. Need to include a text box with help text so that users may provide additional details to the scheduler. That text box needs to have policy language to the effect of “This box is used only to provide additional information to the scheduling team. Do not put XYZ information in this box.”

Comparison of pending review screen

[Home](#) > VA Appointments

NEW APPOINTMENT

Review your pending appointment

Type of care
Audiology [Edit](#)
Community care

Your preferred appointment dates
October 16, 2019 in the morning [Edit](#)
October 17, 2019 in the morning [Edit](#)
October 18, 2019 in the morning [Edit](#)

Where and when we'll call you

Email
email@email.com [Edit](#)

Phone number
1-555-555-5555 [Edit](#)

Call-back time
Evening [Edit](#)

[Request appointment](#)

[Home](#) > VA Appointments

NEW APPOINTMENT

Review your pending appointment

Type of care
Primary care [Edit](#)

Where
George E. Whalen VA Medical Center [Edit](#)
500 Foothill Drive
Salt Lake City, Utah 84148

Purpose
Routine/Follow-up [Edit](#)

Type
Office visit [Edit](#)

Your preferred appointment dates
October 16, 2019 [Edit](#)
October 17, 2019 [Edit](#)
October 18, 2019 [Edit](#)

Where and when we'll call you

Phone number
1-555-555-5555 [Edit](#)

Call-back time
Morning [Edit](#)

[Request appointment](#)

Observations

1. Users found the review screen helpful.
2. Users did not understand that the process was over when they hit “request appointment” blue button.

Quotations

- “Okay. I just see that it is a reviewal screen to ensure I had all correct. I am glad it has the edit buttons so if I mess up I can edit it. Why does community care does not have an edit button?” -P5
- “Clicking that request button took me [to the confirmation page]. Maybe it should say ‘submit request and return home’. You take me to a confirmation page to tell me what I already knew. If I said it and I am not setting an appointment I am sending a request for an appointment. So, do you see what I am saying, I am coming from that review page and now this confirm page and I have not set anything.”
- “What will happen- in reality by the end of the week I should have an answer.” -P9
- “It is just showing what you entered prior to you requesting. Just the typical confirmation thing. They will let you know if the dates are available or when the closed appointments are around those dates. I would expect it on the next screen personally. “ -P10

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Everything should be editable.
2. Update content to make it clearer that the blue button COMPLETES the request.
3. Include all of the information provided in the request process.

Comparison of confirmation screen



Observations

1. Confirmation and pending screen look too visually similar to each other, which is confusing users about whether the process is complete or not.
2. The checkbox is a confusing element adjacent to the warning error.
3. The alert is a good element that helps Veterans understand that they do not have an appointment yet.

Quotations

- “It is just telling you that you are pending request, and someone need to call to confirm the appointment. It is not confirmed until someone in the office confirms that the date is available.” -P2 ‘
- “It says you do not have a scheduled appointment yet. Why is it not bigger than the check mark? That should be the first thing I see. I would like to see on the top of the page that I do not have a scheduled appointment yet. That would set me up for what else I will read. If I see that appointment pending and the check mark I would assume I have an appointment. The check mark makes me think I have just scheduled an appointment. That is why I am saying to put the warning first then make it bigger to draw attention away from the check mark.” -p5
- “See where it has where, I like to see that and would like that on the other one.” - P5
- “At this point I guess it would be nice to have something that has “send”. It says appointment is pending. It needs some radio button that says approve and wait for a call. Something. It says view appointment, and I don’t have one. It needs to provide an option to click here to go to the home page and wait for a call or view existing appointment because I have appointments for something else. I didn’t actually create an appointment yet so unless that says up there your appointment is scheduled. I would be using the option schedule new appointment.” -P6
- “We were already shown this. I don’t understand it. I think the page prior to this would be best, here’s your review then submit it. There is no reason to review submit and look at it again. The bottom line is that I still don’t have an appointment. So, this is the part that is confusing, you have asked for an appointment, clicked a button to confirm the appointment. What do you do after this page? Confirmed twice, looked at it twice. I am not seeing anything different. This can confuse older vets making them question if I scheduled or asked for the appointment. Keep it simple.” -P6
- “ This is confusing- I thought when I click the other screen that would be it. If there was a screen that notified you that you will be contact when an appointment is made, or we are processing for an appointment, that would make me feel more confident.” -p9
- “It leads you into question when they are going to notify me , so you can’t really make plans to take time off. This is why I don’t try to schedule things like this. I try to schedule maybe a month out for reasons like this. “ -P10
- “Well we didn’t put a location so I would want to know where it is at. I guess if I put my own information I would know where I am at or if they can’t then they would give you a choice of locations. It is leaving it up in the air not knowing when or where the appointment will be, I would think it would take a long time and it is frustrating.” -P10
- “This one tells you that they will call within 48 hours so it provides assurance that they will let you know when it is and a peace of mind that they will contact you within 2 days. It makes it a bit better.” -P10

Recommendations and Areas for Further Exploration

1. Update the look of this page so it is different from the review page.
2. Remove the check for reviews.
3. Include next steps on this page. (E.g. You will receive a call or email within {time}. You do not need to do anything else at this time.)
4. Keep the alert, but edit the text.
5. Edit the title to make it clearer that they are done with the request process and what the next steps are.

