



**The Lab at OPM**

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## **Exploration of Veterans Perspectives of their VA Health**

### **Data**

### **Project Plan**

*DRAFT*

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# Table of Contents

[Exploration of Veterans Perspectives of their VA Health Data Project Plan](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Stakeholders/SMEs](#)

[Approach](#)

[Discovery](#)

[Fieldwork](#)

[Estimated Schedule](#)

[Methodology](#)

[1:1 Contextual Inquiry](#)

## Introduction

The Veterans Experience Office and the Lab at OPM is pleased to present this Project Plan to the VA National Center for Ethics in Health Care. The primary focus of this effort is to develop a clearer understanding of Veteran perspectives about the use and sharing of their health information and how Veterans and their trusted support networks expect it should be handled across the complex information ecosystem of VA and beyond.

Today, there is a crisis of confidence in how many digital media platforms handle user privacy. With an increasingly seamless capability to share health data through APIs, now is an opportune time to delve into the issues to gain insights into what Veterans expect from VA regarding their health information.

## Objectives

Our primary objective is to learn from Veterans and better understand what they expect from VA with respect to the use and sharing of their health data.

## Scope

A small team of designers and strategists from the Veterans Experience Office and the Lab at OPM will work in concert with VA stakeholders from the VA National Center for Ethics in Healthcare to bring the project to completion.

## Stakeholders/SMEs

Name (Based in)	Organization	Team
Jane Newman (Boston) (Lab) Patty Beirne (Lab) Denise Kitts (DC) Erin Siminerio (DC) Dave Leonard (Detroit)	Lab at OPM, Veterans Experience Office	Project Team
Helga Rippen (DC)	VA DOD Interagency Program Office	SME

Ken Berkowitz (NYC) Virginia Sharpe (DC) Mary Beth Foglia (Seattle)	VA National Center for Ethics in Healthcare	SME
Laura Damschroder (Ann Arbor) Tanner Caverly (Ann Arbor) Michelle Gornick (Ann Arbor)	Ann Arbor VA Center for Clinical Management Research/COIN	Ad hoc SMEs (Have done similar work on the topic in the past)
Theresa Hancock	MyHealtheVet (MHV)	Possible assistance with recruitment through MHV Coordinators and Users

## Approach

### Discovery

Currently in progress, the discovery phase involves literature reviews, research, planning, and analysis before embarking on field interviews. Most resources circulated by the team via email can be accessed through VA Pulse in this account:

<https://www.vapulse.net/groups/exploring-veteran-perspectives-on-health-data>

The following is underway:

- ✓ Review and analysis of current VA Health Data policies and past research across treatment, payment, operations, and research domains.
- ✓ Review and analysis of relevant literature and current policies and principles across a selection of relevant private sector health care organizations.
- ✓ Recruitment strategy for interviews through MyHealtheVet and possibly other channels
- ✓ If possible, a card sort exercise with MHV users (sent through email list) to get an idea of preferences for current principles.
  - <https://adhoc.optimalworkshop.com/optimalsort/health-data>
  -

## Fieldwork

Fieldwork primarily involves either in-person interviews or conference calls with Veterans. To eliminate the costs related to travel, we will focus on sites where local team members live and virtual interviews.

We estimate that we will need 60-minutes of uninterrupted time with 10-20 Veterans to gather meaningful insights about the topics. VEO and program contacts will help with arranging interviews, meeting space, conference calls and logistics. If there are opportunities to work with staff from the National Center for Ethics in Health Care either virtually or on-site, we would be happy to include staff in interview activities if time and schedules permit.

## Estimated Schedule

TBD

## Methodology

### 1:1 Contextual Inquiry

**60-minute 1:1 moderated live (or phone) interviews** with Veterans.

- **Recruiting/Screening:** 10-20 Veterans recruited from MHV (those with Blue Button downloads, MHV Coordinators, and others TBD).
- **Debriefing:** The project team will debrief for 60 minutes at the conclusion of the day

- **Research Artifacts:** Verbatim notes, debrief notes, consent forms will be organized and stored on VA Pulse.
- **Analysis:** Key findings will be presented informally. The research will feed directly into the Principles document and any related artifacts.

## Greeting

Hello, thank you for joining us today!

Do you have about 60 minutes to spend with us today?

## Informed consent (~2m)

[VA Veteran Health Data Perspectives Project Consent Form](#)

## About the conversation (~3m)

Thank you for making the time to meet with us today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and this is \_\_\_\_\_.

We are working on a project to understand your experiences with VA healthcare, and your thoughts about how your health information is used. In the past, the VA hasn't done a great job listening to Veterans' needs, so we're trying to change that.

My colleague \_\_\_\_\_ will be listening carefully to you and taking notes while you and I talk. I am going to ask you general questions about your experience with the military, then more specific questions about how you manage your health information and what your expectations are around it. We are interested in hearing your thoughts and opinions. You are an expert in your own experience and we are here to learn from you. Your voice is important because it helps us understand how we can improve. There are no wrong and right answers to these questions. We are just interested in your ideas.

- As I speak to you today, I may sound like I'm asking "why" a lot. That's because I want to make sure I capture your details correctly.

- Before I ask you a few background questions, I want to remind you that your job is really easy, you just have to be yourself and act as you naturally would.
- As we talk today, please be honest with your positive and negative thoughts.
- Nothing you say will hurt my feelings.
- I will now begin recording the session (make sure to tap record!)

First would you tell me a little bit about yourself. When did you Serve in the military and where? What was that like for you?

- What military branch were you in?
- Did you deploy overseas? Were you ever involved in combat?
- Is there anything else we should know about you?
- How long have you been using VA Health Care?
- Do you use MyHealtheVet?

Thinking about the times when VA has handled your health information are there any situations that stand out in any way, positive or negative?

- What was that like for you?
- How did this make you feel? How would you like to feel?
- How were you able to get what you needed?
- Would you have liked anything to be different?

Thinking about the times when you needed to access your VA health information are there any situations that stand out in any way, positive or negative?

- What was that like for you?
- How did this make you feel? How would you like to feel?
- How were you able to get what you needed?
- Would you have liked anything to be different?

What type of information do you believe VA has about you?

- What do you believe would be appropriate use?
- What do you trust VA to do with your information?

[Open ended conversations meant to elicit meaning feedback and insights from participants]

**Rank the following in order of importance to you.**

My data should be used for the good of Veterans (P1)

My data should be used to promote equity across all Veteran populations (P2)

I should be able to decide if my data is used for research or commercial reasons (P3)

When my data is used, the purpose must be specified and I should be notified. (P4)

If my de-identified data is re-identified, I would need to authorize it. (P5)

If use of my data has resulted in an innovation, benefit, or financial gain this should be shared with Veterans, Veteran causes or publicly disclosed at a minimum (P6).

My data should be secure, protected, accurate, and complete (P7).

I should be able to easily access my own health data. (P8)

I should be able to make changes to my VA data if I feel it is inaccurate, incomplete or irrelevant. (P9)

**Exit**

- Well, [participant name] that does it for us. Your input is very important to us and I want to thank you.

**Debrief**



- What did participants do?
- How did participants characterize what they did? Use their words.
- What did you see going on?
- What surprised you?
- What did you learn in that session?

## Budget Projection

Item Description	Estimated Time	Hourly Rate	Estimated Cost
2 people, 20 hours of interviews	40	220	8800
Recruitment coordination	20	220	4400
Documentation, processing interviews	25	220	5500
Identification of themes, synthesis	25	220	5500
Communications, storytelling	25	220	5500
Presentations to leadership	10	220	2200
Contingency	20	220	4400
Travel Time	48	220	10560
Travel (3 trips @ 2K each)			6000
		<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>52860</b>