

Using Technology to Remove Economic Barriers to Abortion Care

DC Abortion Fund and Code for DC

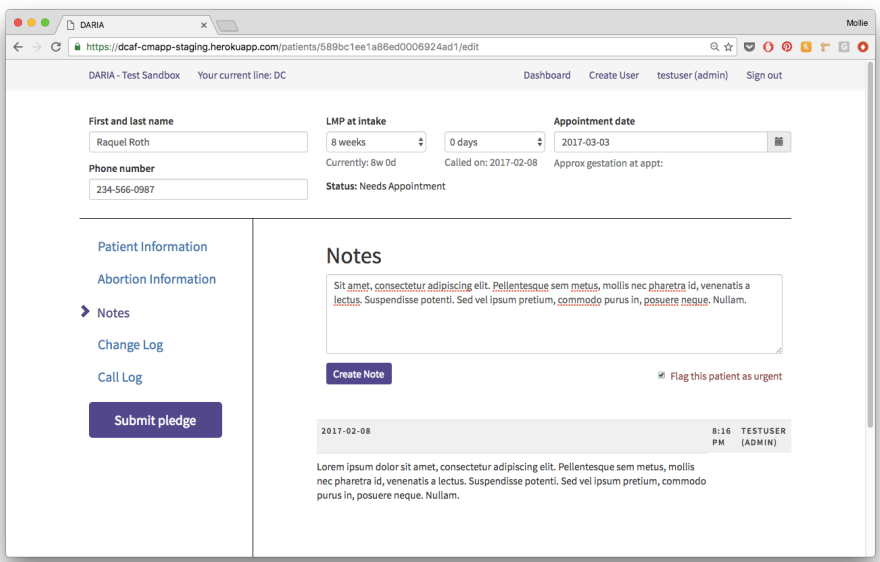
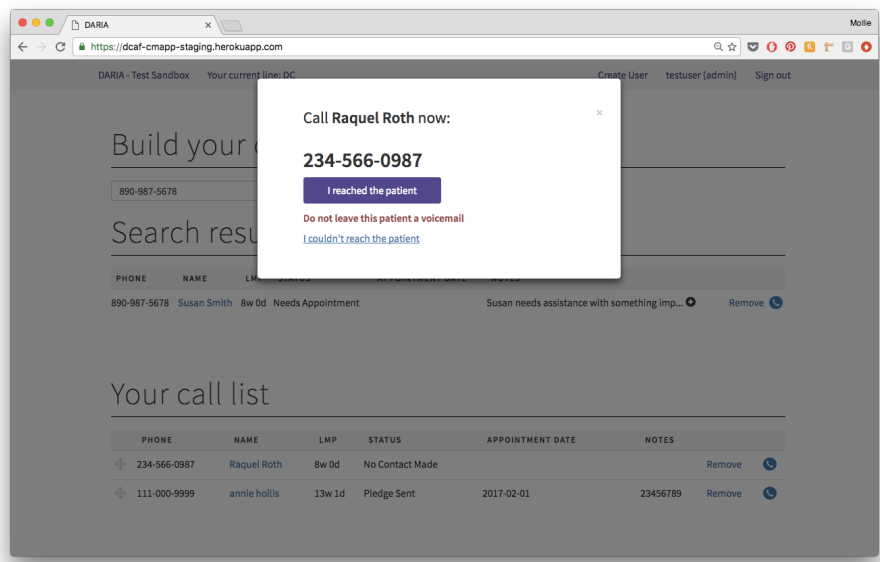
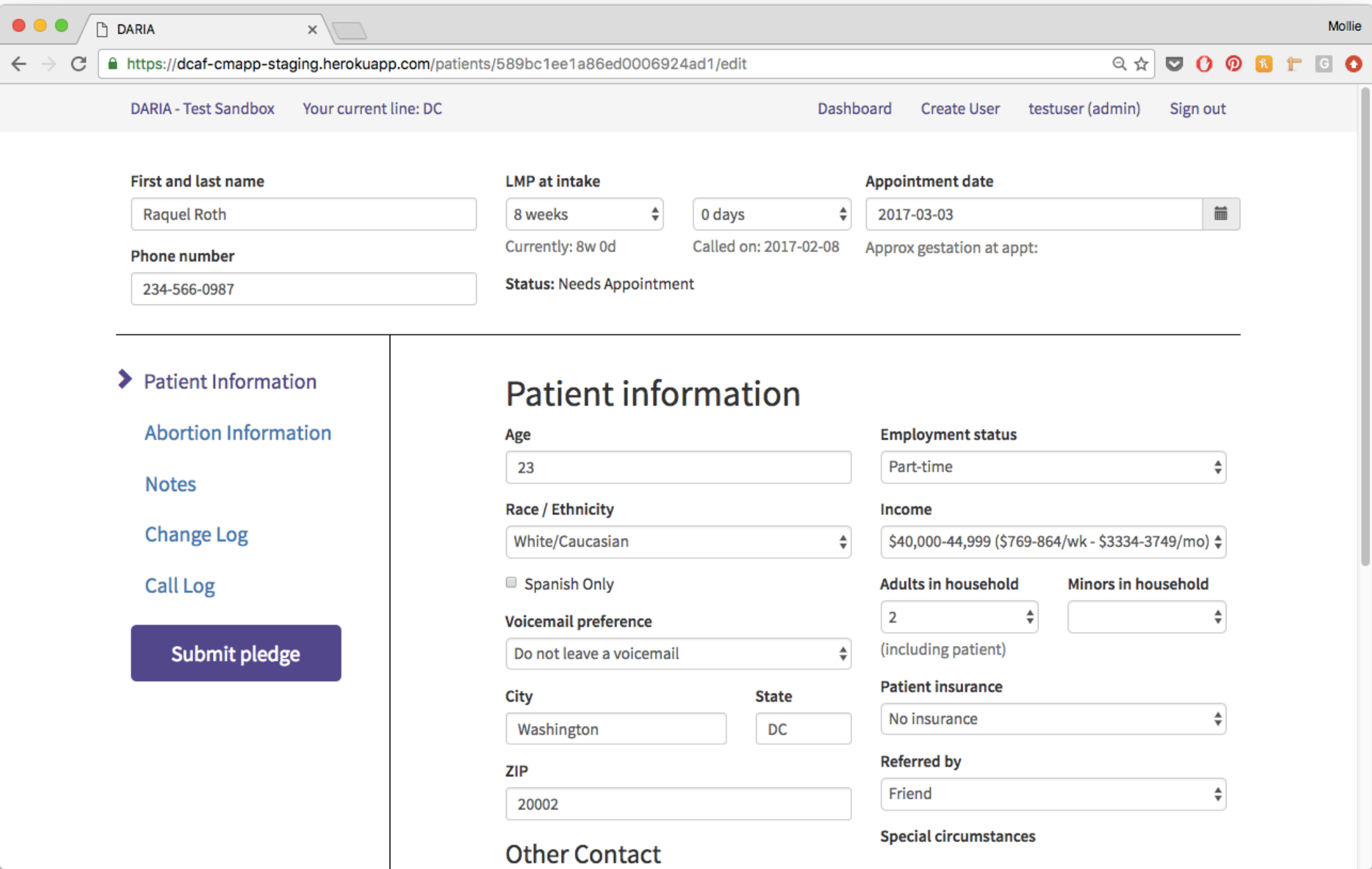
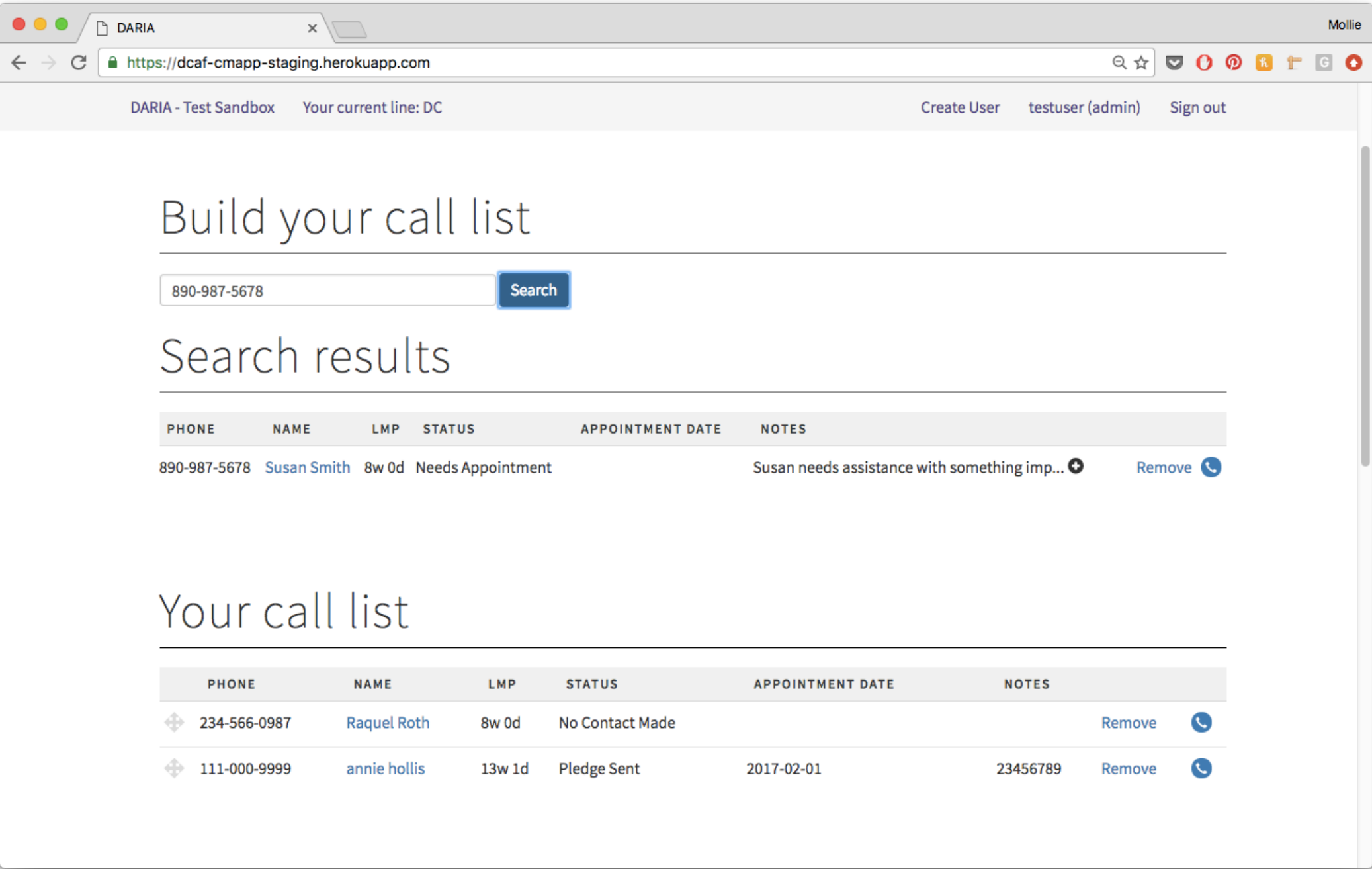
The Problem

Abortion funds are meeting a higher demand than ever before in the most hostile climate in years. Our tools of binders and spreadsheets have not kept up with these challenges—our intake can overflow, security can be cost prohibitive, and we can’t always afford to redirect our resources toward these problems without an impact to our direct support.

The Solution

Volunteers at both the DC Abortion Fund and Code for DC partnered to build a modern system that reduces the stress of intake, securely records sensitive data, and is very affordable. After more than a year of development, the low-cost web application was launched in December, and we’ve already seen improvements in how we center and serve patients. In addition, it’s engineered to be shared with other funds, or repurposed by other Reproductive Justice organizations.

Shared Spreadsheet	DCAF CM App (DARIA)
Awkward to use	Straightforward, easy to use and read
CM needs to be at an Excel-capable and Crypto-capable computer	CM can be any secure computer or tablet with internet
Insecure: data was downloadable, possibly exposing private info	Secure database, data only available for export to key administrators
Vulnerable to data deletion or editing	Data is automatically saved, changes are tracked within the system
Formatting vulnerable to unintended change but unable to reformat	No formatting within the system, only data
No reliable or consistent way to track all calls or the CMs who made them	Calls and CMs are automatically tracked
One user at a time	Multiple users in the system at once
Pen and paper note taking while listening to voicemails	Call lists made within system
Inefficient searching for patients	Easy patient search from the start
Voicemail preferences buried in notes	Voicemail preference clearly displayed
Manual tracking of budget	Automatic budget tracking



How We Did It & How You Can Too

- Partner with organizations outside the Repro Justice sphere.** Meet design and technology pro-bono groups like your local Code for America Brigade where they are, and work with their industry best practices and tools like GitHub. People with a variety of skills and experiences will want to help!
 - Build a system with the users, not for them.** DCAF Case Mangers participated in user interviews, surveys, usability tests, and regular product prioritization. CMs helped map the patient and CM journey at the beginning of the project:
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- Make the system secure.** Reproductive justice groups are dealing with a lot of sensitive information! Use existing services’ security where possible, rigorously review and test code before it goes to production, and monitor for newly discovered vulnerabilities.
 - Build with open source technology.** The DCAF CM app source code is freely available to be reused and modified. Anyone can contribute to the project or use it to start a new one.
 - Add structure.** Volunteer projects need deadlines. Work towards a minimum-viable product using short sprints and regular planning meetings. Your tech partners can help!