# Revisiting Martinsburg User Acceptance Testing
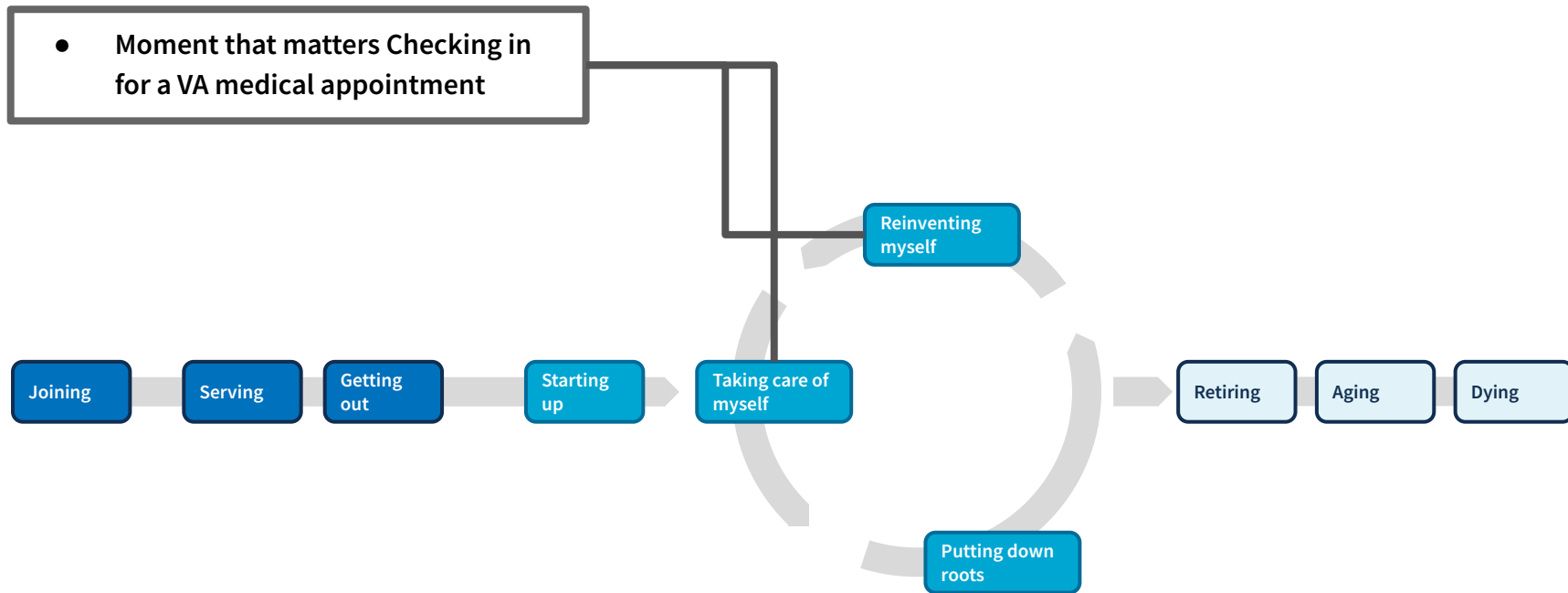
Research Readout

# How this research maps to the Veteran journey

- **Moment that matters Checking in for a VA medical appointment**

Joining

Serving

Getting out

Starting up

Taking care of myself

Reinventing myself

Putting down roots

Retiring

Aging

Dying

For a fully detailed Veteran journey, go to
https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/platform/design/va-product-journey-maps/Veteran%20Journey%20Map.pdf

Serving and separation

Living civilian life

Retiring and aging

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# OCTO-DE goals that this research supports

Martinsburg UAT | October 26, 2021

| Supported | Not supported |

| Veterans and their families can apply for all benefits online | Veterans and their families can find a single, authoritative source of information | Veterans and their families trust the security, accuracy, and relevancy of VA.gov | **Veterans can manage their health services online** | VFS teams can build and deploy high-quality products for Veterans on the Platform | **Logged-in users have a personalized experience, with relevant and time-saving features** | Logged-in users can update their personal information easily and instantly | Logged-in users can easily track applications, claims, or appeals online |

**Measures to increase**

| **Completion rate of online transactions** | Percent of applications submitted online (vs. paper) | Veteran satisfaction with VA.gov Benefit use and enrollment, across all business lines | Benefit value (in $) delivered from online applications or transactions | Number of VA.gov users as a function of total Veteran population | **Usage of digital, self-service tools** |

**Measures to decrease**

| **Time to successful complete and submit online transactions** | Time to process online applications (vs. paper) | Call center volume, wait time, and time to resolution | Time from online benefit discovery to benefit delivery |

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Background & Goals

# Background

This product is reimagining the ecosystem that allows a Veteran to check in for a medical appointment. The healthcare experience team in particular is creating the portion of the ecosystem that enables a Veteran to utilize their mobile device to check-in (letting the VA know that they have arrived for their appointment) via VA.gov.

With this round of research, we are looking to validate the updated release of our MVP with real users checking in and staff. Updated functionality includes additional identity verification steps, read-only contact information, checking in for multiple appointments, and the use of the revised poster throughout this process.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Research Questions

- After a Veteran utilizes the new mobile check-in solution, are they called back for their appointment without having to talk to a clerk/Medical Support Assistant (MSA)?
  - How is the read-only contact information review feature being used?
  - How is the multiple check-in feature being used?
  - Are Veterans able to complete the task with the updated poster?
- What is the impact to the staff workflow when Veterans check in on their mobile phones?
- How do Veterans and staff feel about the mobile check-in solution?

**VA** | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Hypothesis to be tested

- The Veterans will successfully check-in via their mobile phone, and verify their identities without additional points of friction.
- The updated poster successfully communicates the need to wait for a link to continue the check-in process and offers guidance on how to send a text to initiate check-in.
- The Veterans will be able to view and understand the display of multiple appointments for the day.
- There should be minimal to no impact to clinical staff workflow on how they know a Veteran has arrived for their appointment.
- Veteran and staff responses will indicate that the mobile phone check-in solution is useful and does not negatively impact experience or clinical workflow.
- Veterans who confirm that their contact information is correct will minimize the number of questions that MSA need to ask a Veteran.
  - Note: MSAs should only need to review next of kin and insurance information for Veterans who confirmed their contact information.

**VA** | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Methodology

# Method and detailed research questions

- I traveled to Martinsburg VAMC and conducted intercept interviews with Veterans before their appointment. I watched the Veterans interact with the updated poster, complete check-in on their mobile phone and asked follow-up questions.
- During the same trip, I observed and interviewed a variety of staff members, who have a role in the check-in process.
- The complete conversation guide with all the detailed research questions asked as well as the raw notes from the visit can be found on VA's GitHub.

# Who we spoke with

**Veterans**

- 3 out of 7 Veterans participated in the mobile check in pilot.
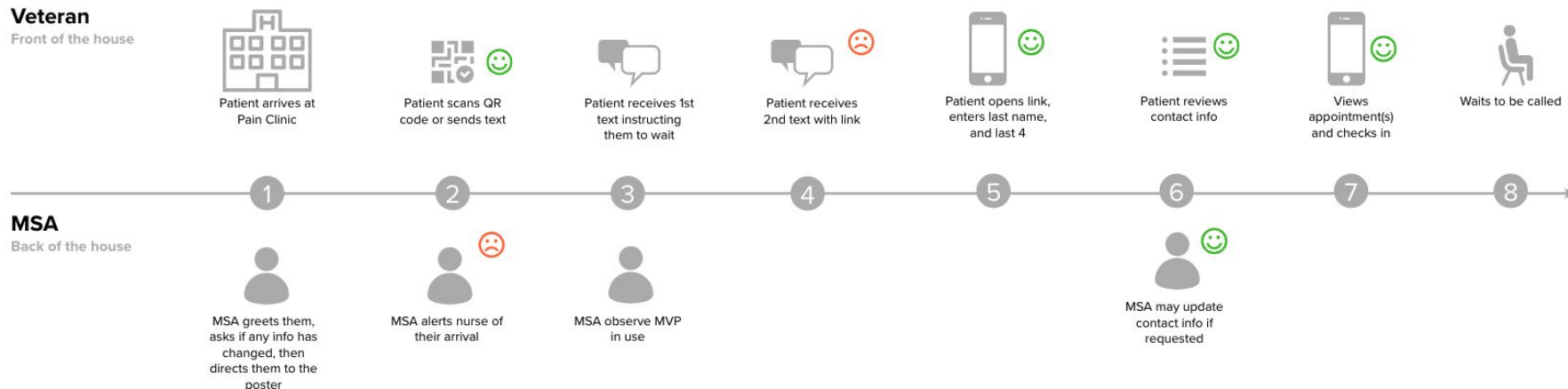  - 4 of the Veterans did not have smartphones.

**3 Staff**

- Pain Clinic MSA
- MSA Trainer
- Administrator

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Research Findings

# Patient & Staff check in journey

Martinsburg UAT | October 26, 2021

High level view of the patient check in process in Martinsburg

# Poster process

- Process: The updated, 3 step process on the new poster was clear and easy to follow.
- Size: The tabloid size fit well in the Pain Clinic waiting room. The 36x48 was too large to hang on the wall or door.
- 1 out of 3 Veterans didn't understand how to use a QR code and sent a text message.



**Have an appointment?**
**Check in with your phone**

① Text **check in** to **53079**

To:
**53079**
Message:
**check in**

OR scan this code.

② **Wait until you get a text back with a link.**
This should only take a few seconds.

③ **Tap on the link to start your check-in.**
Data charges may apply.

? **Need to update your insurance, contact, or other information?** Check in with a staff member instead.
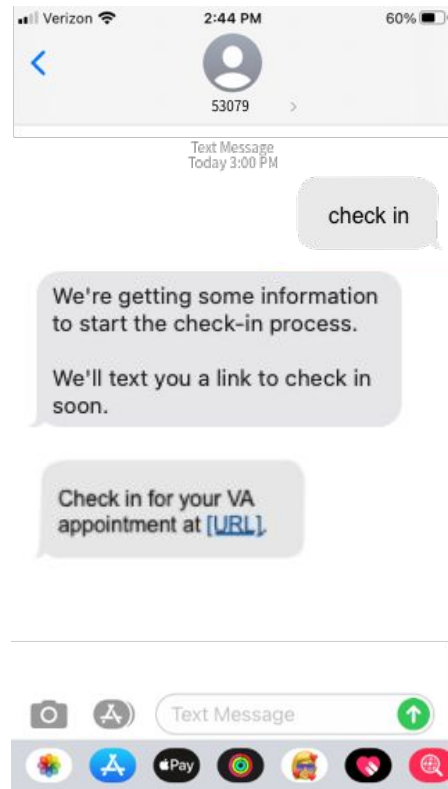
VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Text message timing

- The initial auto-response text message was immediately viewed by all 3 of the Veterans.
- However, the second follow up text containing the actual check in link took 30-45 seconds on average to arrive.
  - 2 out of 3 Veterans decided to take their seats in the waiting room before glancing back at the mobile devices for another text message.

# Contact info updates

Martinsburg UAT  | October 26, 2021

The read-only contact information was very much appreciated by the Veterans.

- The only contact information update on this day was due to the Veteran viewing this information and prompting the MSA to make a change to their mailing address.
- When the MSA verbally checked in the Veteran prior to testing the mobile check in experience, the Veteran said "no update" when asked if there were any changes to his information.
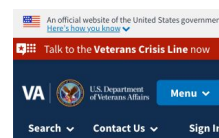
VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Staff requests

Alert system is needed to notify MSA or nurses of the Veteran's arrival.

- There have been reports of patients being missed after completing the mobile check in because the MSA was not aware they had arrived and checked it.
- Currently, the MSA intervenes in the mobile check in process behind the scenes to notify the nurses through Teams of the Veterans arrival. (An ongoing theme noted in [previous research](#))

Mobile coverage is not reliable

- The Prosthetics Clinic was proposed as the next pilot location but suggested wifi is needed. (An ongoing theme noted in [previous reserach](#))



VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
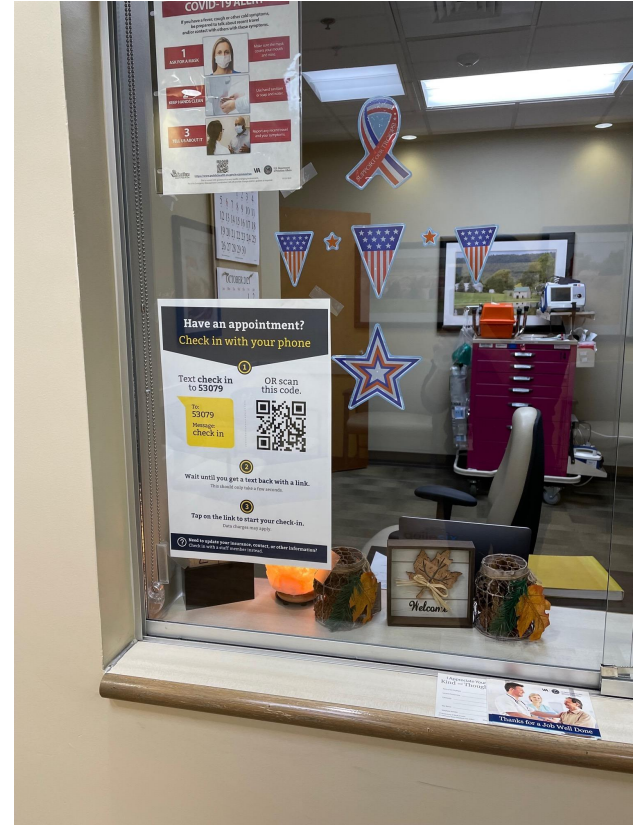
# Returning users

There was one instance of a Veteran returning to use the mobile check in process a second time.

- He was clearly the most comfortable going through the process.
- There was an issue when he clicked the link from the text message to check in; the initial view of the webpage indicated that he didn't have an appointment. Only after he refreshed, did his appointments appear.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Key findings

1. Poster modifications clarifying the 3 step process were beneficial.
2. Text message containing web link for check in is delayed 30-46 seconds.
3. Previewing contact information was useful in prompting update with MSA.
4. Veterans were able to view multiple appointments for the Pain Clinic.
5. Additions/changes to mobile check in since last visit has had minimal impact on MSA's workflow.
   a. MSAs need to be alerted when Veteran has checked in.
   b. The Prosthetics Clinic was proposed as the next pilot location but suggested wifi is needed.
6. Staff and Veteran's impressions of the pilot were still overwhelmingly positive.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Recommendations and Next Steps

# Recommendations

1. Explore ways to increase speed of text messages, so Veterans aren't left waiting (move this up in backlog).
2. Learn more about possible refresh bug for repeat users ([only 1 instance observed](#)).
3. Focus on tabloid or letter size of check in poster for now.
4. MSAs still want/need to be notified about check in (staff alerts)
   a. Explore opportunities to provide staff notifications (when patient has completed pre-check in, and when they have checked in).
5. Expand to busier pilot site to conduct additional testing.
   a. Multiple clinics/specialities with Veterans having multiple appointments.
   b. Check in process without MSA involvement.
   c. Use of check in poster.
   d. Returning users.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs