

VA



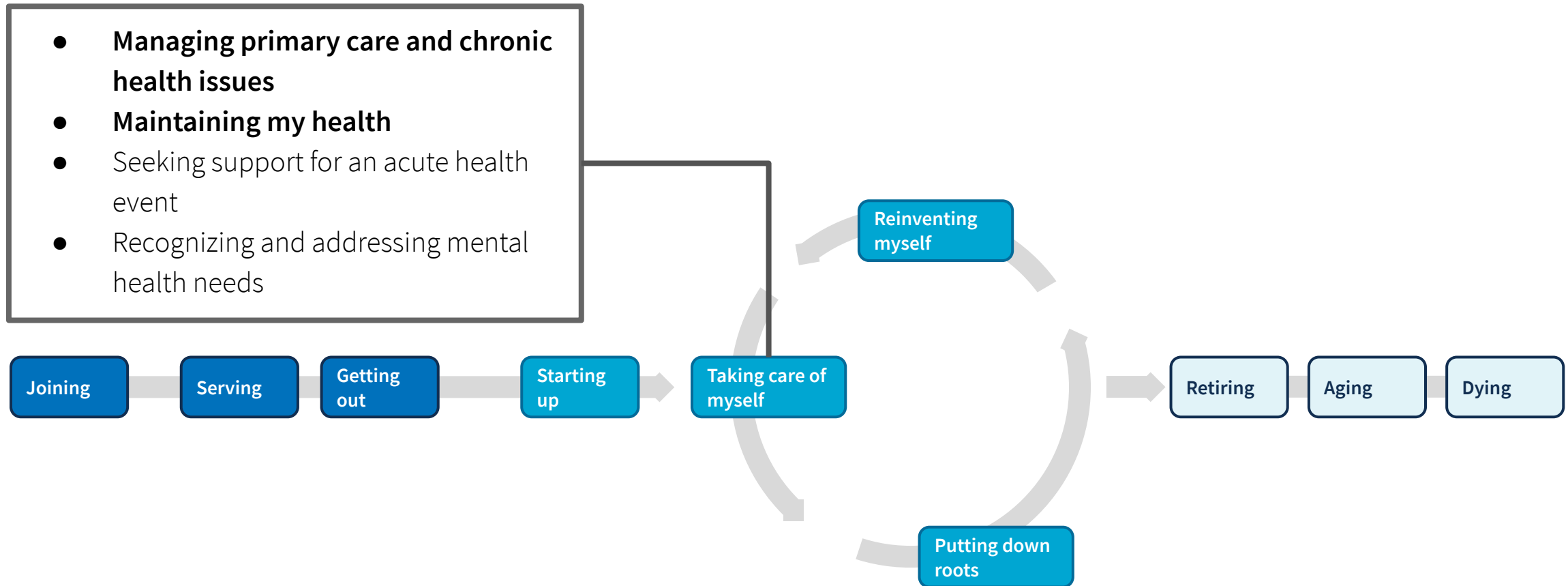
U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Select a facility - variant test

VA Online Scheduling

How this research maps to the Veteran journey

VAOS facility selection variant test | 08 23, 2021



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

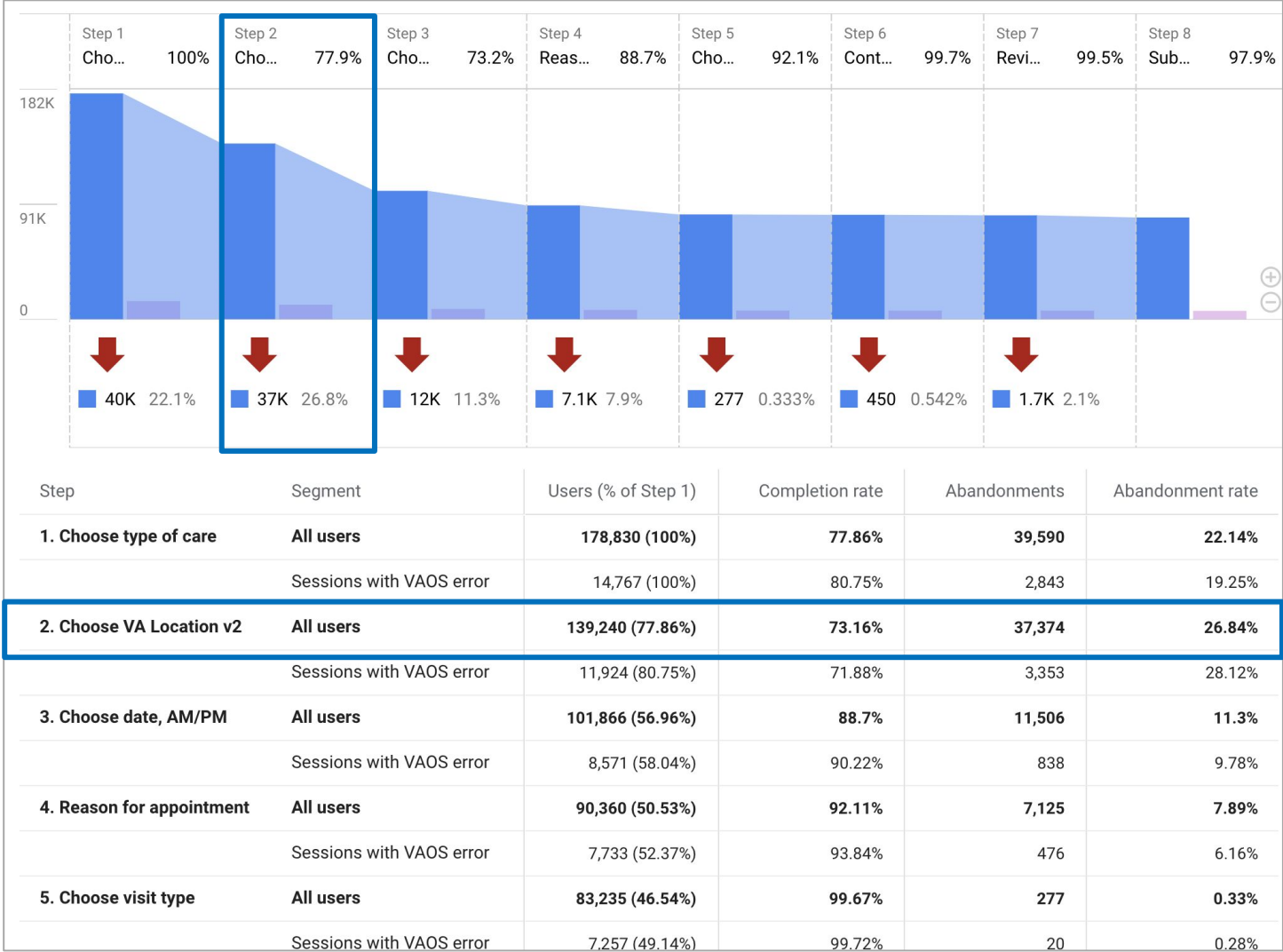
VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Problem

The page where Veterans select a VA facility consistently has the highest abandonment rate in the VAOS appointment request flow.



Abandonment rate of 27%
Data from request flow, April 1 - June 22, 2021

Hypothesis

We believe that if we provide simpler interactions and clearer content on the facility selection page, Veterans will be able to more easily understand the task this page is asking them to complete.

This will help them complete this step:

- Faster - shorter time spent on page
- More often - lower abandonment rate on page

Current facilities page

An official website of the United States government
[Here's how you know](#)

Talk to the **Veterans Crisis Line** now

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

Search Contact us Judy

VA online scheduling

NEW APPOINTMENT

Choose a VA location for your primary care appointment

Below is a list of VA locations where you're registered that offer Primary care appointments. Locations closest to you are at the top of the list.

Facilities based on your home address:

521 W Cedar St
Rawlins, WY 82301

Or, [use your current location](#)

Please select where you'd like to have your appointment. (*Required)

- ☐ **Cheyenne VA Medical Center**
Cheyenne, WY
134.5 miles
- ☐ **Fort Collins VA Clinic**
Fort Collins, CO
140.7 miles
- ☐ **Loveland VA Clinic**
Loveland, CO
150.3 miles
- ☐ **Sterling VA Clinic**
Sterling, CO

New facilities page

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Talk to the **Veterans Crisis Line** now

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

Search Contact Us Hector

VA online scheduling

NEW APPOINTMENT

Choose a VA facility

All facilities where you're registered that offer primary care scheduling online.

Show facilities near

Your home address

- ☐ **Loveland VA Clinic**
Loveland, CO
839.8 miles
- ☒ **Fort Collins VA Clinic**
Fort Collins, CO
840.6 miles
- ☐ **Cheyenne VA Medical Center**
Cheyenne, WY
874.7 miles
- ☐ **Sidney VA Clinic**
Sidney, NE
957.2 miles
- ☐ **Richmond VA Clinic**
Richmond, IN
1860 miles
- ☐ I need a different facility

« Back Continue »

Can the information in the header be simplified?

New - filter/selector to sort the list

568px (iPhone 5/ SE display height)

New - radio button replaces "why isn't my facility listed" add'l info.

Supporting research

“Content presented the biggest burden to all users. Veterans indicated excessive trouble understanding, parsing through, and comprehending the information presented to them.

“[Veterans] indicated not only was the amount of content a burden, but the variation throughout the content used to describe the same information difficult for them to manage.”

- [VA Online Scheduling: VAOSR and "Express Care" Research Report](#), July 2020

Supporting research

- Showed redesign during [preferred facilities research sessions](#).
- Saw no major pain points around navigating the page.

S1 - TASK 1				
Using VA.gov, show me how you would set up a Primary Care visit with your doctor in Evanston.				
- Clicks Schedule link	4	3	3	3
- Clicks Start Scheduling	4	4	4	4
- Clicks Primary care	4	4	4	4
- Selects Evanston	4	4	4	4
- Opens add'l info	4	4	1	4
- Clicks link to Profile	4	1	1	3

Scenario 2	P5 - 6/	P7 - 6/3	P10 - 6/4	P13 - 6/
S2 Task 1 - save a facility				
- Click schedule and manage health appts	4	4	4	4
- Click start scheduling	4	4	4	4
- Click primary care	4	4	4	4
- Click continue	4	4	4	4
- Select Evanston	4	4	4	4
- Click continue	4	4	4	4
- Click "yes"	4	4	4	4
- Click continue	4	4	4	4
- Select date	4	4	4	4
- Select time	4	4	4	4
- Click continue	4	4	4	4
- Click Schedule appointment	4	4	4	4

OCTO-DE goals that this research supports

VAOS facility selection variant test | 08 23, 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
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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
			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	

Setting up the test

- Dev team built the facility page variation under a feature flag.
- PM set up analytics event labels and created visualizations in GA.
- Analytics team helped troubleshoot some of the visualizations, but setup was mostly self-service.

Current facilities page

This screenshot shows the current VA online scheduling interface. At the top is a red banner with the text 'Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now'. Below this is a dark blue header with the VA logo, 'U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs', and a 'Menu' button. A navigation bar contains 'Search', 'Contact us', and 'Judy'. The main content area has a breadcrumb '< VA online scheduling' and a section titled 'NEW APPOINTMENT Choose a VA location for your primary care appointment'. It includes a paragraph explaining that the list shows VA locations where the user is registered for primary care appointments, sorted by proximity. A dashed horizontal line separates this from a section titled 'Facilities based on your home address:'. Below this, a blue vertical bar displays the address '521 W Cedar St, Rawlins, WY 82301'. A link 'Or, use your current location' is provided. A note states 'Please select where you'd like to have your appointment. (*Required)'. A list of five facilities follows, each with a radio button, name, location, and distance: Cheyenne VA Medical Center (134.5 miles), Fort Collins VA Clinic (140.7 miles), Loveland VA Clinic (150.3 miles), and Sterling VA Clinic (distance not fully visible).

New facilities page

This screenshot shows the new VA online scheduling interface. It features a similar top banner and header as the current page. The breadcrumb is '< VA online scheduling'. The main heading is 'NEW APPOINTMENT Choose a VA facility'. Below this, a paragraph states 'All facilities where you're registered that offer primary care scheduling online.' A section titled 'Show facilities near' includes a dropdown menu currently showing 'Your home address'. A list of five facilities is displayed, each with a radio button, name, location, and distance: Loveland VA Clinic (839.8 miles), Fort Collins VA Clinic (840.6 miles), Cheyenne VA Medical Center (874.7 miles), Sidney VA Clinic (957.2 miles), and Richmond VA Clinic (1860 miles). At the bottom, there are two buttons: '<< Back' and 'Continue >>'.

Can the information in the header be simplified?

New - filter/selector to sort the list

568px (iPhone 5/ SE display height)

Running the test

- Released this variant to 50% of **VA.gov users** (not VAOS specifically)
- Test ran for **2 weeks**, from July 28 to August 11th.
- Turned the variant off to analyze the data.

Results

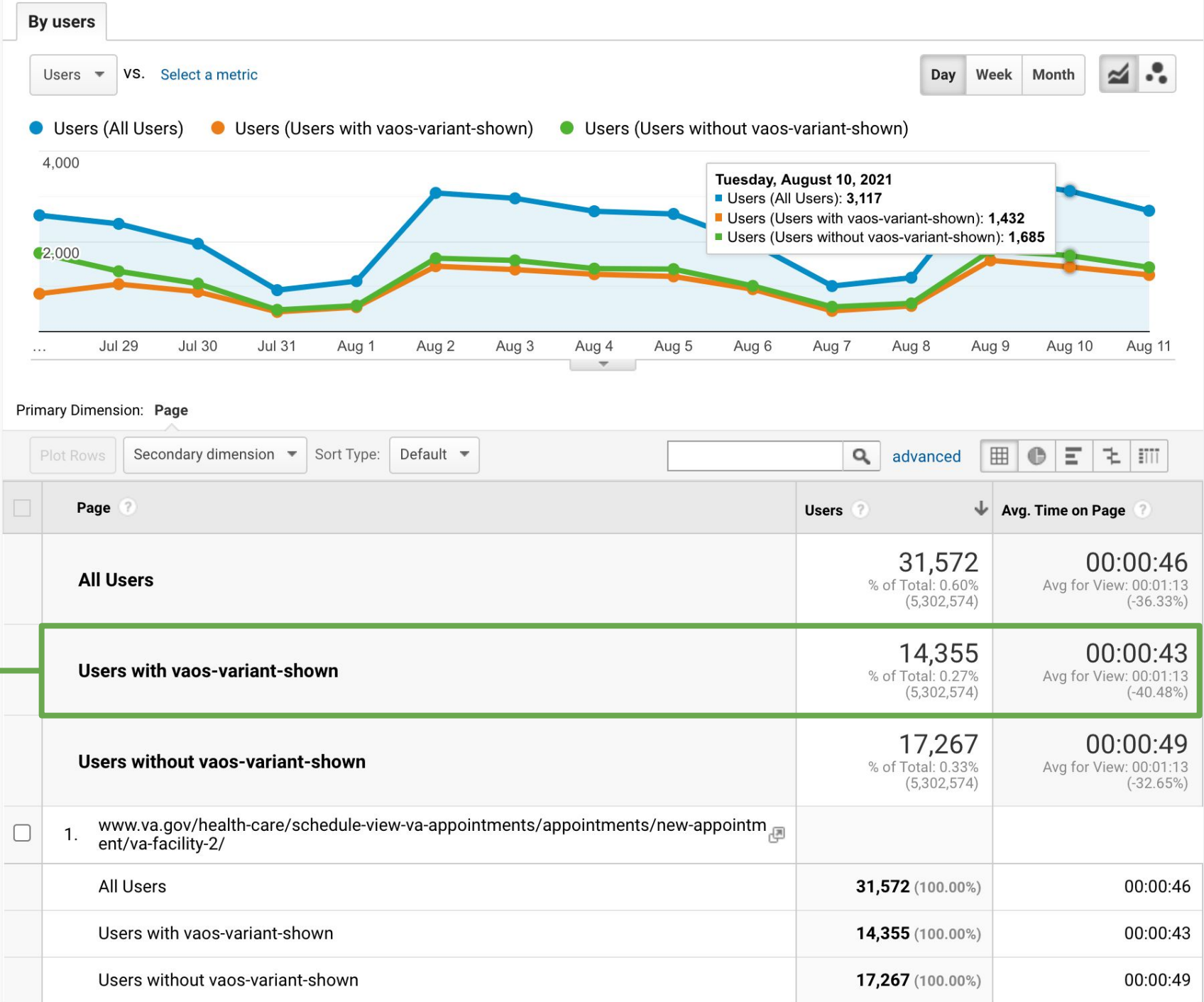
Participants

31,572

Total users in the study

14,355 (45%)

Users saw the variant



Time on page

46 seconds

All users (avg)

43 seconds (-3s)

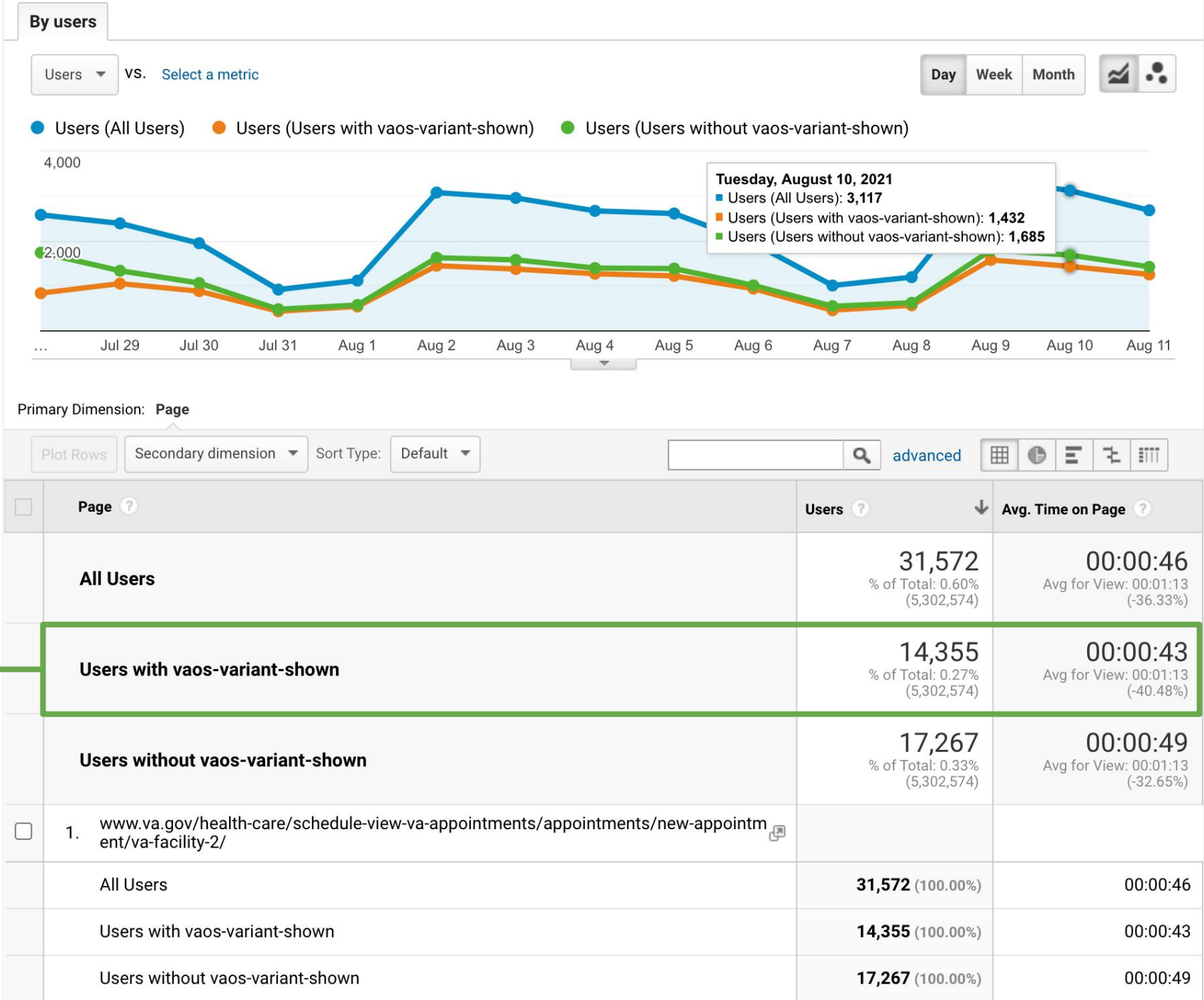
Variant users

49 seconds (+3s)

Control users

51 seconds

Avg. for 3mos ahead of test



Abandonment

24%
All users (avg)

18% (-6%)
Variant users

28% (+4%)
Control users



Step	Segment	Users (% of Step 1)	Completion rate	Abandonmen...	Abandonment rate
1. Choose VA Location v2	All users	31,572 (100%)	76.44%	7,437	23.56%
	Users with vaos-variant-shown	14,355 (100%)	81.57%	2,646	18.43%
	Users without vaos-variant-shown	17,268 (100%)	71.75%	4,878	28.25%
2. Choose date or choose clinic	All users	24,135 (76.44%)	-	-	-
	Users with vaos-variant-shown	11,709 (81.57%)	-	-	-
	Users without vaos-variant-shown	12,390 (71.75%)	-	-	-

In the middle of the test we turned on direct scheduling, which resulted in two paths that = completion

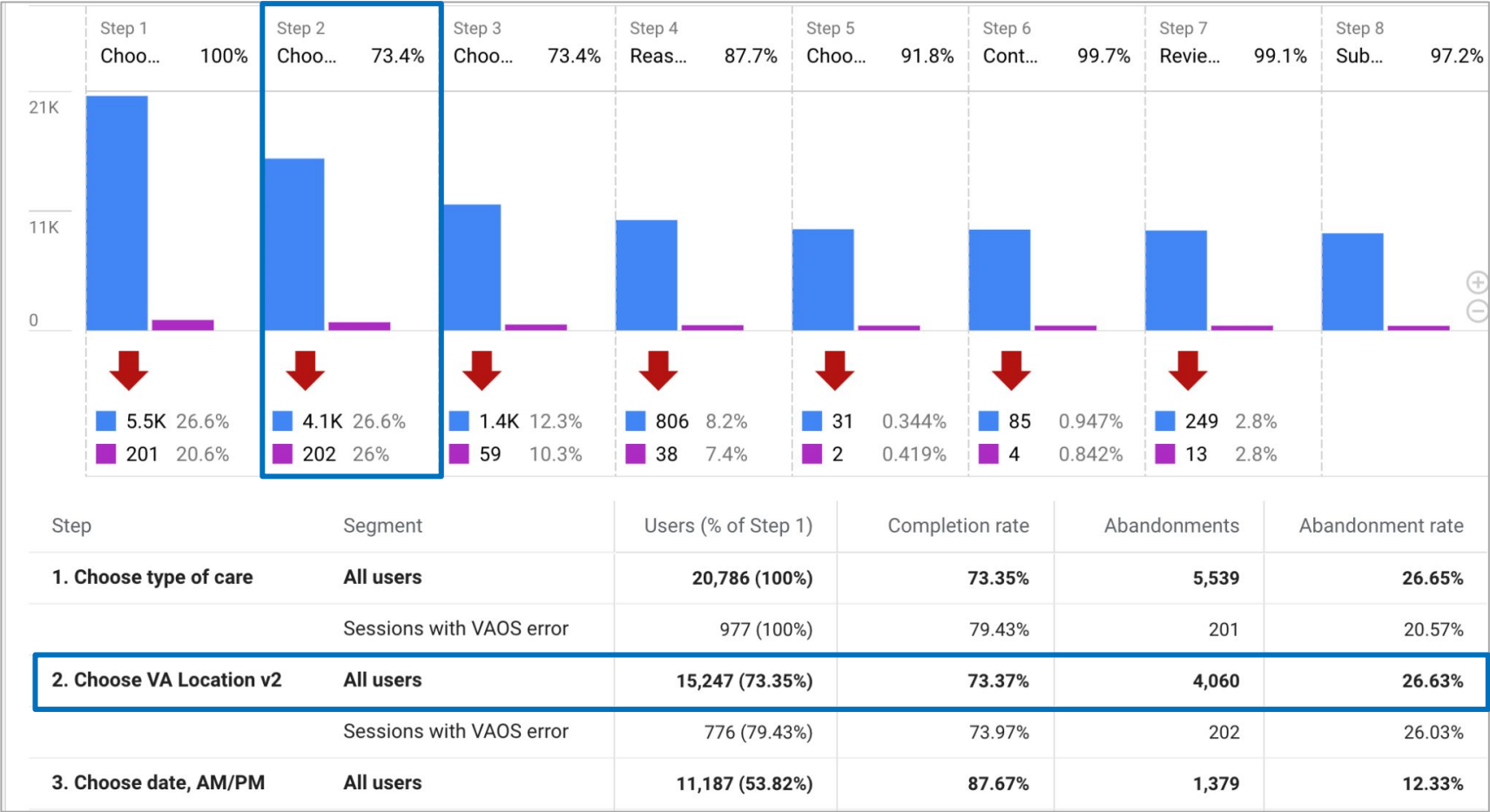
Abandonment rising?

From 8/5 - 8/11, before the variant was released, abandonments were **27%**.

Average for the year has been **26%**.

Follow-up research:

Was **28%** for the control group part of a trend, or a blip?



Note on statistical significance

- Didn't calculate statistical significance for this study.
 - Having two different sample sizes added complexity to the abandonments (or conversions) calc.
 - Unclear how to calculate statistical significance for time on page.
- Goal was “do no harm.”

Sorting facilities

Sorting in the control

Facilities based on your home address:

521 W Cedar St
Rawlins, WY 82301

Or, [use your current location](#)

Sorting in the variant

Sort facilities

By your home address



By your home address:

✓ 1703 Orr... Evanston, IL

By your current location

Alphabetically

Default sort - variant

As expected, most users saw the list sorted by residential address first

- By default, the list sorts by closest to home address for both variant and control.
- If no home address is on file, both lists default to alphabetical sort.

Default Sort-Events and Users		
Event Label	Total Events	Users
vaos-variant-default-distanceFromResidentialAddress	17,020	13,513
vaos-variant-default-alphabetical	1,193	961
vaos-variant-default-distanceFromCurrentLocation	15	15

Follow-up research: We didn't set intentional logic for a current location default, so we're not sure how 15 users ended up in this state (especially since it requires browser permission...)

Sorting changes - variant

As expected, most users who did switch the sort method changed it to current location.

- Roughly the same number of users switched the sorting method to alphabetical and residential address.

Sort Changes-Events and Users

Event Label	Total Events	Users
vaos-variant-method-distanceFromCurrentLocation	2,832	2,121
vaos-variant-method-alphabetical	780	691
vaos-variant-method-distanceFromResidentialAddress	758	655

Final sort - variant

As expected, residential address was the final sort order for most users.

Alphabetical sort slightly beat out current location.

Final Sort-Events and Users

Event Label	Total Events	Users
vaos-variant-final-distanceFromResidentialAddress	14,147	10,930
vaos-variant-final-alphabetical	1,091	840
vaos-variant-final-distanceFromCurrentLocation	744	622

Follow-up research: Was alphabetical sort more useful than current location? More usable? Did users just not want to share their location?

Sorting facilities - control

Twice as many control users attempted to sort by location.

(Over the past 4 months the average number of “sort by location” clicks has been 1997 per week or ~4000 every two weeks.)

Follow up research:

Do higher control clicks mean:

- It was easier to find that option on the control (not in a dropdown)?
- The variant was easier to understand so fewer Veterans tried that option?

Control-Sort Clicks

Event Label	Total Events	Users
vaos-request-current-location-clicked	5,517	4,226

Sort Changes-Events and Users

Event Label	Total Events	Users
vaos-variant-method-distanceFromCurrentLocation	2,832	2,121

Next steps

- Track time on page and abandonment for two weeks after the variant is taken down.
- If time on page and abandonment continue pre-test trends, release the updated page.

Next steps

- Align CC provider selection to facility selection.
- In future studies, look at tools for calculating statistical significance.

Questions?

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