

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Baseline Wayfinding Research Recommendations

for Sitewide Crew

# Agenda

1. Top finding from research
2. Options for addressing it
3. Other recommendations to consider
4. Appendix: Potential design additions and analytics data

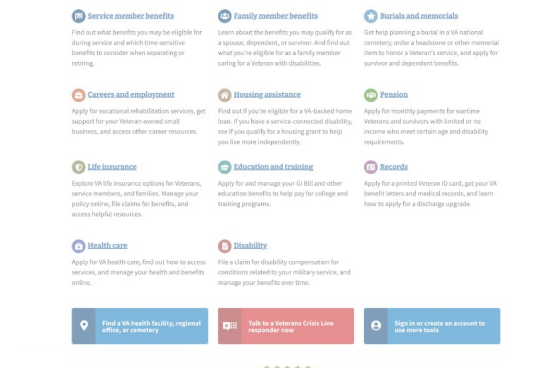
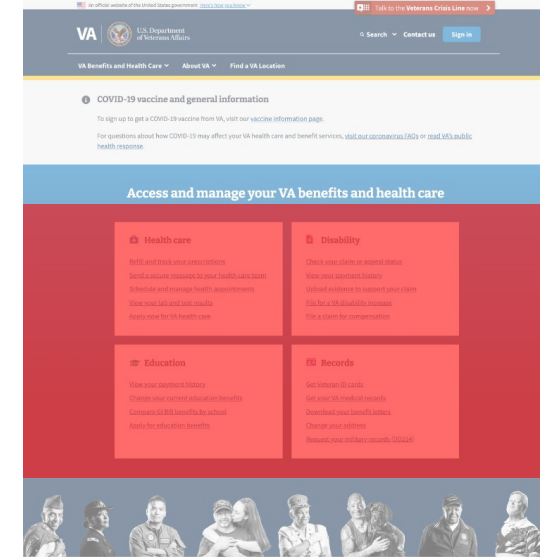
# Top Finding from the Research

On the VA.gov home page, most users **focus** their attention on the “**top 4**” boxes, and look there to do tasks

This works well for many tasks (those listed in the boxes), but not for others

(e.g., find a specific form, set up direct deposit for travel reimbursement, update dependents)

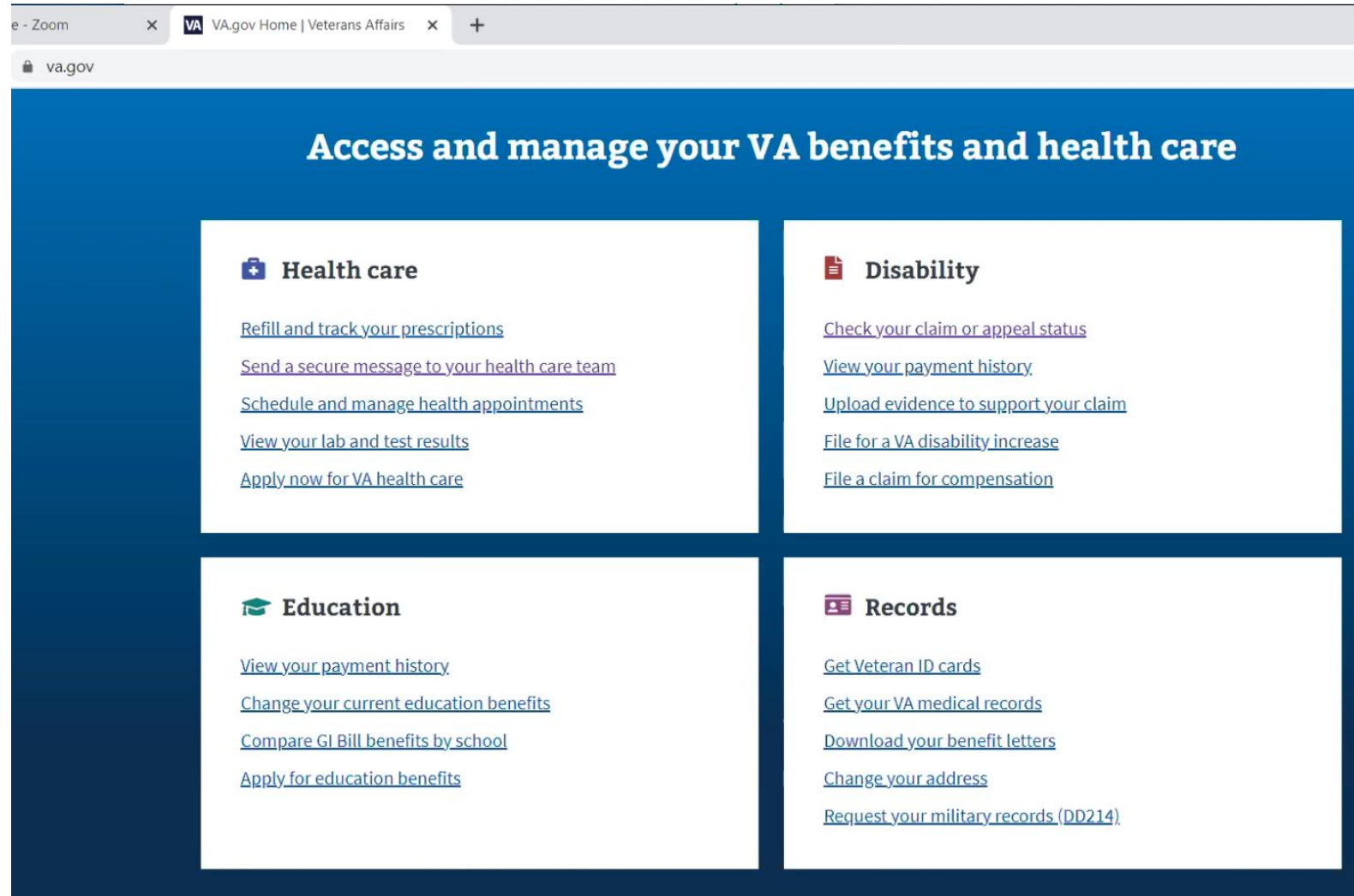
*Users get stuck and don't know where to look next*



# WHY do users get stuck?

When a user's browser window is filled with the "top 4" boxes, **they don't think to scroll up/down because they don't see anything else.** Invisible:

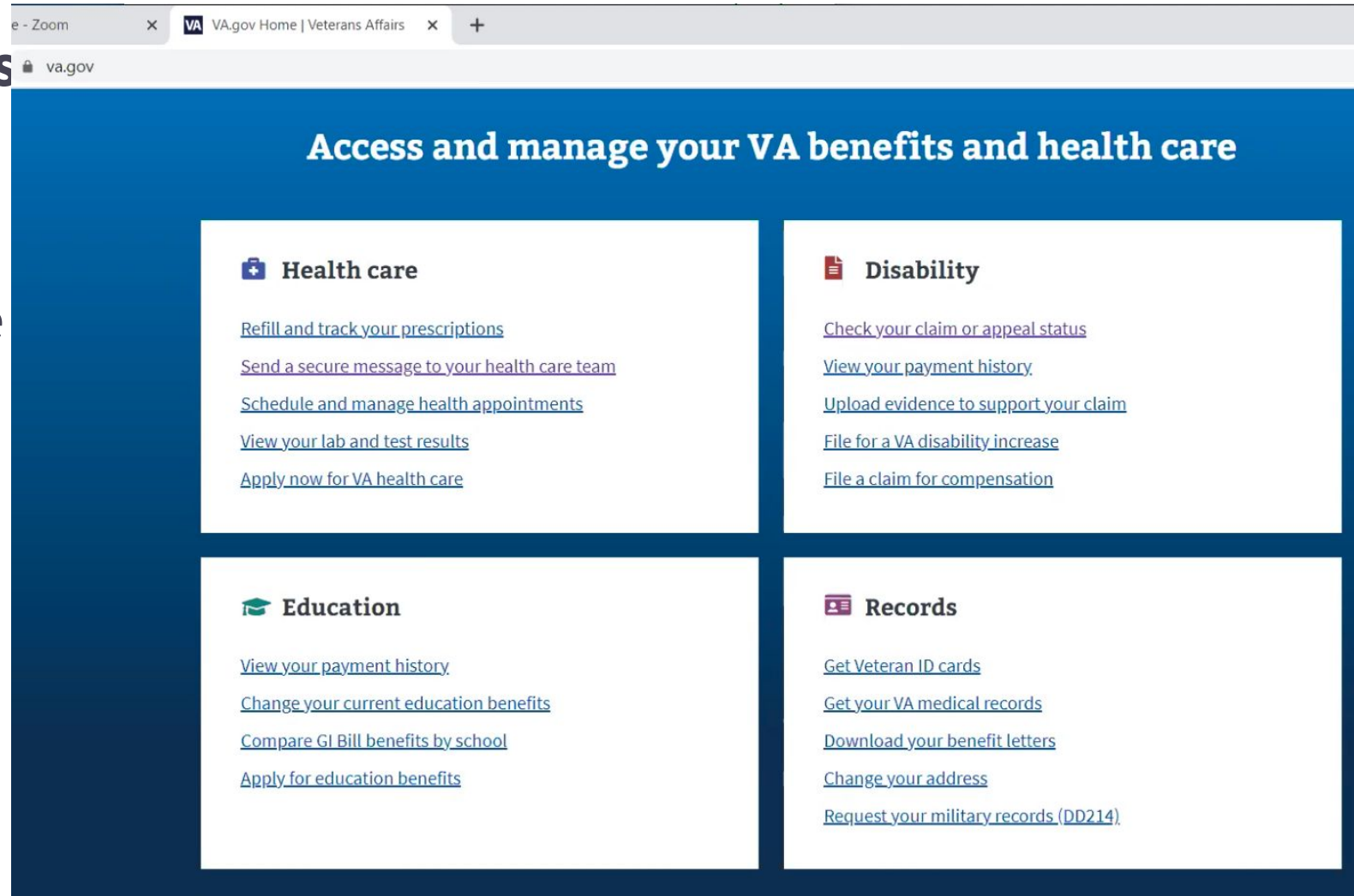
- Header (Search, Find VA location, megamenu)
- Footer (VA forms, Resources & support)
- Links below the boxes



# What would help users who are stuck?

We want users to **see and use**

- Search
- Find a VA location
- VA Benefits and Health Care
- VA forms
- Resources & support
- Links below the boxes



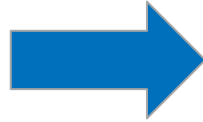
# What could we do?

Consider making design changes to the home page that guide users

- **More/different links in the “top 4” boxes** (where they’re looking)
- **More visibility for search/browse tools**

# What could we do?


- **More/different links in the “top 4” boxes** (where they’re looking)



- ❑ **New links** for difficult tasks (and remove low-use links per analytics)
- ❑ **View More link** that opens a longer list of task links
- ❑ **Can’t find what you’re looking for? link** to search/browse tools

- More visibility for search/browse tools

# What could we do?

- **More/different links in the “top 4” boxes** (where they’re looking)
  - **More visibility for search/browse tools**
- ❑ New links for difficult tasks (and remove low-use links per analytics)
  - ❑ View More link that opens a longer list of task links
  - ❑ Can’t find what you’re looking for? link to search/browse tools
- 
- new Search landing page**  
*(in progress)*



# Options

- A. **Add/change links in the “top 4” boxes** (including new tasks, View More, Can't find what you're looking for?)
  - Do we know enough to recommend what new tasks to include?
- B. **Do more research on top tasks**
  - So we *know* what Veterans' top tasks are and how they do them
  - Start from Cindy's top task list and solicit others from stakeholders
  - Do a card sort with Veterans to assess importance, frequency
  - See how results align with links in our “top 4” boxes
- C. **Add/change links in the header** (*but will users even see them?*)

# Other Recommendations to Consider

| Recommendation   | because of usability issue   |
|--|--|
| 1. <b>Increase font size of links</b> in “top 4” boxes (currently 16px)                              | Font too small for an older user to read (and current best practice is 19px)       |
| 2. <b>Make COVID banner alert</b> on home page <b>dismissable</b>                                    | Users find COVID banner alert on home page annoying and want to close it but can't |
| 3. <b>Revisit home page design</b><br>(e.g., could move row of images down to actual bottom of page) | Users not scrolling down past row of images  |
| 4. <b>Add content on 2FA methods</b><br>(e.g., article in Resources and support?)                    | User didn't know about non-texting options for 2-factor authentication             |

# Next Steps

Please consider these preliminary recommendations with your team

- ❑ Are these inputs useful for you?
- ❑ Possible to make a few design tweaks to the VA.gov home page?

Let's keep in touch!

- ❑ *Let me know how I can support you* with my current research findings
- ❑ I could conduct more wayfinding studies, especially if there are any design changes to the home page and/or sitewide navigation

# Appendix

# Potential new task links for the “top 4” boxes

Based on research participants' difficulties doing the wayfinding top tasks in this study...

1. Add **top form searches** (per analytics),  
including Get form to appoint representative to Disability
2. Add Get travel pay reimbursement to Health Care
3. Add Update your direct deposit to Records
4. Add Update your dependents to Records
5. Add Get your VA medical records to Health care (already in Records)

# Potential new links for the header

Based on research participants not finding the search/browse tools that we provide in the sitewide navigation...

1. Add a **Forms** link  
(to Find a form)
2. Add a **Resources** or **Help** link  
(to Resources and support)
3. Add a wide **search box** next to Search  
(so site search is more visible/eye-catching)

# Clicks on Links in “Top 4” Boxes

Key:

> 100K



50-99K



25-49K



20-24K



10-19K



1-9K



## Health care

[Refill and track your prescriptions](#)

[Send a secure message to your health care team](#)

[Schedule and manage health appointments](#)

[View your lab and test results](#)

[Apply now for VA health care](#)



## Disability

[Check your claim or appeal status](#)

[View your payment history](#)

[Upload evidence to support your claim](#)

[File for a VA disability increase](#)

[File a claim for compensation](#)



## Education

[View your payment history](#)

[Change your current education benefits](#)

[Compare GI Bill benefits by school](#)

[Apply for education benefits](#)



## Records

[Get Veteran ID cards](#)

[Get your VA medical records](#)

[Download your benefit letters](#)

[Change your address](#)

[Request your military records \(DD214\)](#)

Analytics data from 1,572,842 unique events during 5/19/2021 - 6/3/2021

Questions?