

BDD Research Findings usability test 2

Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD)

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View the [Research Plan](#).

Research Goals

- To understand the current user experience going through the current BDD process (paper forms).
 - How is the current process perceived by Service Members, including: the workload, the timelines/deadlines, the complexity of the process, the pain points, the need for support/info?
 - To learn more about where users would look for info about BDD on VA.gov.
- To learn more about how participants find info about BDD on VA.gov.
- To see whether or not participants are able to navigate to the page where they submit a BDD claim online.
- Test a mockup of a new BDD info page and compare it with the current (*Pre-discharge claim* page).
- To understand how the online BDD flow (in VA staging) is experienced by participants and how it matches their expectations.
 - Test the BDD flow for usability errors.

Research Methodology

- A task-based remote, moderated usability interview taking place May 20 - May 22, 2020.
- We interviewed 9 Service Members, all but two in active duty, via Zoom.

- The interview started with a few introductory questions (2-5 min), then some questions about prior BDD experience (when applicable.) (0-10 min).
- The users were then given a wayfinding task on VA.gov, to see how they would navigate to find information on the BDD program, as well as finding the page where they could file a claim online.
- The users were given a link to an Invision mock-up of a new BDD info page (*Pre-discharge claim* page) and asked to compare with the current one.
- Participants were then given a link to the BDD flow (and log-in details) in staging and asked to file an online BDD claim. They were prompted with questions and asked follow-up questions as they moved through the BDD flow.
 - They were asked to talk out loud about their experience.
- At the end of the interview, the users were asked some exit questions about the experience with the BDD flow overall.
- A note taker and several observers were present (via Zoom).

Who we talked to

- 7 Service Members in active duty, and 2 veteran.
- 7 Male and 2 Female.
- Geographically diverse (TX, NC, PA, MD, FL, VA, DC).
- Ages varied between 18-54 years of age (recruiter did not record exact ages. Age was missing for several participants).
- Most of the participants seemed to be tech-savvy (except 1).

Research questions

- What are their previous experiences with filing a BDD claim?
- How do participants try to find info about BDD on VA.gov?
- How do participants navigate when they are asked to file a BDD claim online?
- What do participants think about the current BDD info page (*Pre-discharge claim* page) versus the new mockup page?
- What usability issues & pain points do participants experience in the BDD flow?
- Are there any confusing steps or ambiguous language in the BDD flow?

- Are the steps self-explanatory, and does the user organically move from step to step?
- Are users missing any information in order to feel confident moving forward?
- Are there other questions or concerns the users have while going through the BDD process?
- What do veterans expect will happen after their BDD claim form is submitted online?

Key Findings

1. The three users that had filed a BDD claim (paper forms) felt that the BDD claim process was unclear, not easy to fully comprehend, even with the help of a VSO.
2. Participants had a hard time locating BDD info on VA.gov, and mostly used the search bar.
3. Users were confused about the use of both the term *Pre-discharge claim* and *BDD*.
4. Participants were able to navigate and find the page where they could start an online BDD claim.
5. Most participants preferred the new mockup BDD info page instead of the current (*Pre-discharge claim*) page.
6. Overall, participants found the BDD flow to be fast, simple and self-explanatory., although some steps caused some confusion, including:
 - Copy on the Military history page indicates military history listed below, when no military history is established in the system yet.
 - Copy on the New conditions page indicating that they have established a claim when they have not done this yet.
 - Copy on the Supporting evidence page asks SM to add evidence to their claim, when they have not established a claim yet.
 - A couple of users want to see some info about the security level used for handling bank account information.
 - They want to see a number or at least an area code of the vendor calling them. They want a time estimate for the call and a call back number.
7. Participants value the print button and the tracking button on the Submission page. In the tracking tool, they want to see claim status, step in process and steps left.
 - Some participants expected to see a claim number on the submission page.

- If this is not given, one participant suggests to inform that the claim is tracked by social security number.
- Participants would like an email confirmation.

Details of Findings

1. The three users that had filed a BDD claim (paper forms) felt that the BDD claim process was unclear, not easy to fully comprehend, even with the help of a VSO.

- Two participants had filed a BDD claim before, one had just started the process.
- All three participants used a VSO, but still found it difficult to fully understand the process.

“It was not easy to figure out what conditions are indeed accepted for benefits”.

- They felt there was a lot of waiting with not enough updates about the progress. Participants want it to be easier to keep track of their claim, with more updates and info while they are waiting.

Task 1: Find info about BDD and file a BDD claim:

2. Participants had a hard time locating BDD info on VA.gov. They mostly ended up using the search bar.

- Most participants can't find any info about the BDD program by navigating through the menus and the UI.
- Participants go to the Search bar to find info on BDD. They type in BDD if they have heard the term, if not, they type in some version of: “benefits before discharge”. Most of the users then find the *Pre-discharge claim* page. A few participants initially skipped over this link.
- BDD does not seem to be a term that many participants know of, and *Benefits Delivery at Discharge*, does not seem to register easily with Service Members.

3. Users were confused about the use of both the term *Pre-discharge claim* and *BDD*.

- Participants are confused by the fact that both the term *Pre-discharge claim* and the term *Benefits Delivery at Discharge claim* is used. They would prefer that only one term is used for the BDD program.

4. Participants were able to navigate to the page where they could start an online BDD claim (*How to file a BDD claim*).

- Most users have no problems finding the page where they can file a BDD claim.
- Most users click on the Main navigation bar *VA Benefits and Healthcare - Disability - How to file a claim*.
- A few users needed some time to locate the call to action button, but all found it eventually.

5. Most participants preferred the new mockup BDD info page instead of the current (*Pre-discharge claim*) page.

- The participants felt that the current Pre-discharge claim page has a lot of text and that the *Eligibility* section is cramped.

"This blue box is awfully cramped!"

- A few participants expect to be able to start the BDD claim on this page, and to not have to navigate back to the last page.
- Most participants preferred the new mockup page.
 - Most participants liked that there was less text on the new mockup page and found it to be cleaner, more to the point and less overwhelming.
- All participants liked the inclusion of a video about BDD, and would watch this first.
- Participants preferred the gray box with *Other benefits* on the current page.

6. Overall, participants found the BDD flow to be fast, simple and self-explanatory., although some steps caused some confusion, including.

- The copy on the *Military history* page indicates that their military history is listed below, when no military history is established yet in the system.
 - "*This is the military history we have on file for you*". The participants found this sentence confusing, since the page is empty.
- Copy on the New conditions page indicating that they have established a claim when they have not done this yet.

- Two participants found it confusing that we ask for “...*new conditions to add to your claim?*” when they have not established a claim yet: this is their first time submitting a claim.
- Copy on the *Supporting evidence* page asks SM to add evidence to their claim, when they have not established a claim yet.
 - Participants found this sentence confusing as he had not filed a claim yet: “*Is there any new evidence you like us to review as part of your claim?*”

“I am asked to add new evidence to my claim, but I don't have a claim yet! I am making my first claim now”

- A couple of users want to see some info about the security level used for handling bank account information.
- Participants find the copy on the *Claim exam* page under *Supporting evidence* too blunt and not polite.

“Instead of telling us that (...if you missed our call) they will do as they please, I would like to read: ‘*..in order to hold your place in the line, we will schedule an appointment for you.*’ Being an adult, I also want to be able to reschedule my appointment”.

- Participants want to see a number or at least an area code of the vendor calling them, so they are prepared for taking the call.
- They want a time estimate for the call and a voice mail with a call back number.
- A few participants would also like to see an email address here.

7. Participants value the print button and the tracking button on the Submission page.

- Participants would like an email confirmation.
- Participants want a status tracker or a dashboard to see the claim progress/status/changes.
 - Participants want to see what step they are in, where in the process they are and how many steps are left.
 - Participants want to see a timeline of the whole process and a time estimate for completion.
 - Two participants mentioned the Domino pizza tracker as an example of a useful status tracker.
 - Some participants expected to see a claim number on the submission page.

- If this is not given, one participant suggests to inform that the claim is tracked by social security number.

Additional Insights

Participants were confused about what they see as VA internal language.

- Participants were confused by several terms, such as: *Fully developed claim*, *An intent to file*, *Special handling*.

“I don’t know what a *Fully developed claim* is. What is the difference between this and a normal claim?”

“What is an *intent to file*? Does it mean that I now will overwrite my older claim?”

Participants are very positive about having a video on the page if it's relevant and informal.

- Participants would start by watching the video, then read the text.

“A video - that's great! If it's useful!”

Participants have some security concerns

- A few participants have concerns about using their social security number for everything.
- One participant had some security concerns about providing bank account info.
 - He suggested that this could be dealt with later, after a claim in fact had been accepted.

The BDD program is not known by all service members.

- A few participants are surprised that they have been in the military for a long time and never heard about the BDD program before this interview.

“14 years in active duty, and I have never heard about this program!”

“I have never heard about anyone doing this (... filing for a BDD claim) online”

Recommendations

- Ensure that users having filed a BDD claim get enough updates, that they know their claim is in progress, and that nothing is holding it back.
 - This will ensure that users know that their claim progress is normal, that there is no action needed on their part, and prevent users from contacting VA with questions or complaints.
- Add *Benefits Delivery at Discharge* to the navigation / UI.
- Many users have never heard about the BDD program. Consider how to make it more known.
- Use only *Benefits Delivery at Discharge* (BDD) as the single term for this program. Remove *Pre-discharge Claim*.
- Simplify the *Pre-discharge claim* page. Less text, less overwhelming. Include a video.
- Change copy on *Military history* page, *New conditions* page and the *Supporting evidence* page to avoid confusion.
- Change text on the Claim exam page to be more supportive of veteran. Add phone number or area code from the vendor. Add a call back number on page or in voice mail, or add an email address to allow the user to reschedule.
- Add email confirmation after submission of claim.
- Build a status tracker or a dashboard to see the claim progress/status/changes. Include progress steps, timeline of process, time estimate for completion, information that the claim is tracked by social security number.

Next Steps

- We will make the recommended changes to the BDD flow in staging. This is the last UX research effort.
- There will be UAT tests before launch that will happen in July 2020.