

Rx Refill App Usability

Improving Veteran access to VA Rx Refills
December 2021

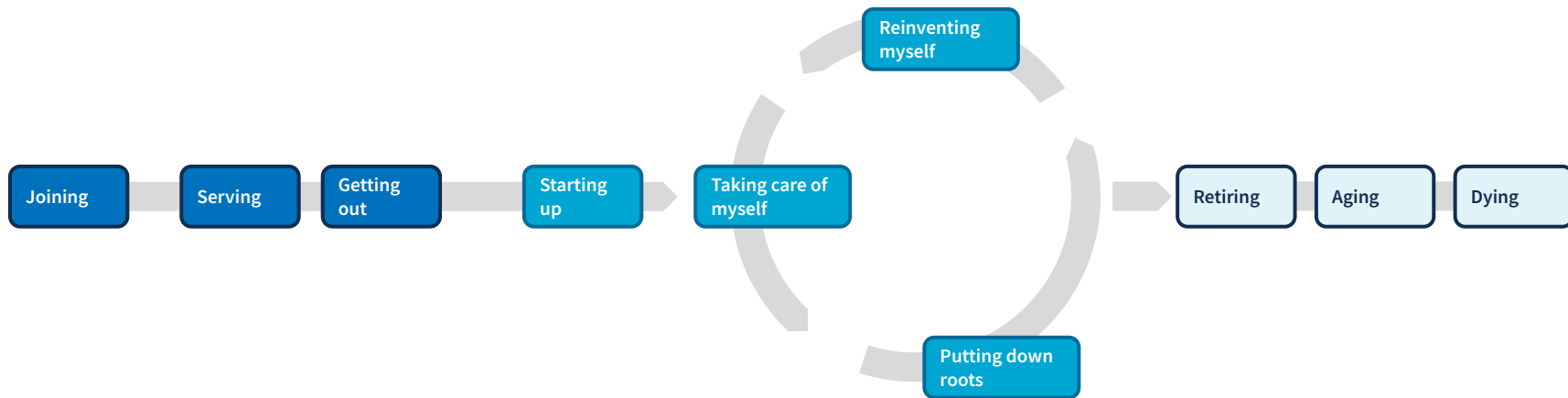


U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

How this research maps to the Veteran journey

Rx Refill App Usability | December, 2021

- **Taking care of myself**
- Reinventing myself
- Retiring



For a fully detailed Veteran journey, go to

<https://github.com/departement-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

Rx Refill App Usability | December, 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

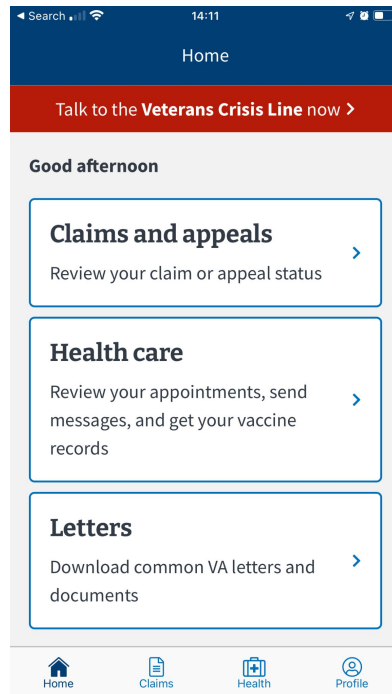
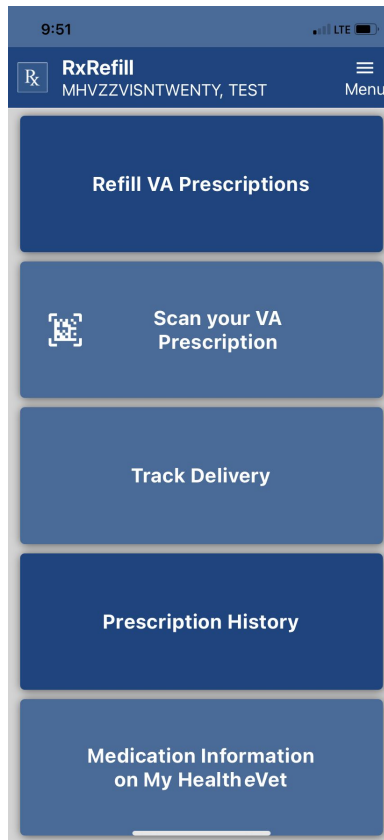
Background

Rx Refill App Usability | December, 2021

Rx Refill is a commonly requested feature in app store reviews.

We want to understand the current state of native mobile Rx Refill at VA.

This study helps us lay the groundwork for helping people who use the **VA: Health and Benefits** app to manage their VA prescriptions.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Participant criteria

Rx Refill App Usability | December, 2021

We talked to seven Veterans.

All managed VA Rx through MHV.

Some were familiar with the Rx Refill app and some were not.

Participants skewed older.

Urban/rural split.

Gender split.

No participants used assistive tech, some used large type settings.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

What we learned

Key findings

1. Formatting matters

- General impression was that app was less cluttered and “showed the right information.”
- Several participants shifted stance from desktop centric approach to mobile friendly after seeing the app.
- Participants with enlarged type on their device had visual bugs that made things hard to read or understand.
- Quantity of copy and scannability could be improved.
- Some UI elements and touch targets were unclear.

Key findings

2. Sign in is unpleasant

- App asks you to sign in a lot.
- One participant chose sign in credential by shortest allowable password.
- Sign in UI does not cope with enlarged type well (separate from app styles?).

Key findings

3. Lists of medications are important in different ways

- Lists are hard or labor intensive to make usable. Location, layout, detail, and sorting all came up in discussion
- Some participants have developed their own systems
- One participant needed to show list to employer in relation to workplace drug testing (false positives)
- The lists can be very long

Key findings

4. Large number of Rx can have cognitive load impact

- “Oh, I have 21 Rx available to refill”
- “They are refillable, I guess I should refill them”
- Lists are different depending on context, not always clear why

Key findings

5. Messaging comes up a lot in relation to Rx

- Many participants were referring to bottles or home grown lists for messaging about Rx.
- One participant talked about attachment limitations or friction.
- Some communication about Rx is Dr to Dr across VA/private lines.
- Messaging is a common pathway for requesting refills.
- Some conversations are about usage instructions.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Key findings

6. Scan Rx is appealing and also buggy

- Several participants were excited about this feature.
- Most that tried it with us had at least one problem, some blocking

Key findings

7. Keeping track of when to refill is not well supported

- Participants had a variety of home-grown mechanisms for tracking when to request. E.g. Write on bottles, count pills left, stocks pill organizers ahead.
- “It would be nice to get an email or something to remind us...”
- One participant stockpiles a buffer so that they wouldn’t get caught short
- Controlled substances complicate this, Rx sometimes gets held by VA to keep supply on hand low.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Key findings

8. Tracking doesn't seem to be a huge factor

- Small sample size. No participants use assistive tech.
- Some people do use this feature.
- Heard variations on “It usually comes pretty quickly and I don’t worry about it.”
- One participant had trouble with up to date addresses and missed some meds
- Some meds are controlled and shipping is *just in time* in ways that can be stressful

Recommendations

1. Dig into accessibility

The poor support for enlarged text suggests that there might be other accessibility challenges for people who rely on assistive technology.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Recommendations

2. Invest in layout and IA

Improve support for variable type sizes.

Think about where information is located and how it can be filtered to be made more understandable, lists in particular.

Think about how to get this information to where it will be helpful (export, messaging, printing).



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Recommendations

3. Prioritize sign in help

Enthusiasm for biometrics varied, but most found sign in cumbersome.

Sign in UI needs to be more responsive.

Anything we can do to minimise need to sign in again.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Recommendations

4. Think about reminders

People are building their own work-arounds and we might be able to better support them in the app.

Could we provide some actionable push notifications?

Could we be creative about the way we predict when it would be helpful to ask for refills? Usage instructions



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Next steps

1. A11y audits

Would like to take a closer look at the app with a11y in mind.

We have a designer who is blind who is willing to records walkthrough for us. We need to sort out access to the app to unblock this.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Next steps

2. Think about structural relationship between Rx Refill and flagship app

How can we improve access to this information with minimal sign in burden?



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Appendix

Appendix

- [Link to Rx App research in Github](#)
- [Link to synthesis Mural](#)
- Link to participant inclusiveness analysis
- [Link to Rx Refill app screen inventory Mural](#)