

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Upcoming appointment questionnaire MVP usability study

Discovery Readout

Background & Goals

Background

Our goal is to improve the in-person and online pre- and post-appointment experiences for Veterans, contribute to physical distancing efforts in VA facilities, and better integrate Veteran-provided data in VA workflows by providing Veterans with a digital option to complete pre- or post-appointment questionnaires and screeners.

Our MVP focuses on improving the pre-appointment experience when visiting primary care providers.

Research goals

This research is to usability test a mobile and desktop version of the upcoming appointment questionnaire design and gain feedback on the content/wording within the questionnaire.

Hypotheses to be tested

- Veterans will be able to successfully complete the questionnaire.
- There will be minimal confusion created by the content and question wording within the questionnaire.

Methodology

Methodology

Method

We conducted 8 remote moderated usability tests via Zoom using the Perigean contract. This method allowed us to share a high-fidelity wireframe prototype (mobile and desktop versions) to confirm if our questionnaire is easily usable by Veterans.

Methodology

Who we spoke with: 8 Veterans

Average disability rating

73.75%

Gender

Male: 6

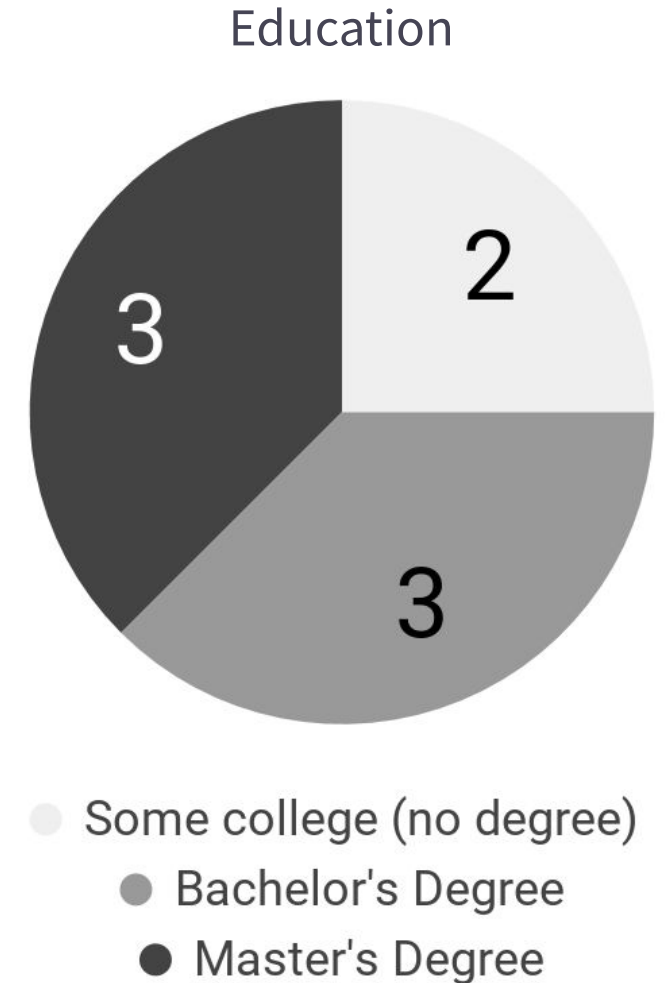
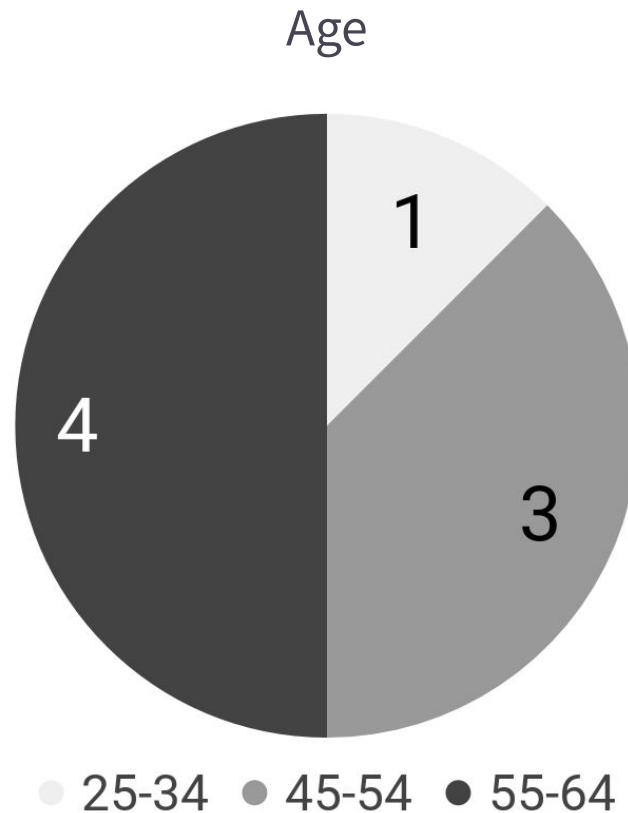
Female: 2

Device used during study

Android: 3

iPhone: 1

Desktop: 4



Research questions: Usability task

- Pretend that you (your name in the prototype will be Hector Allen) just scheduled your annual physical exam with your primary care provider. When you booked it with the call center, you told them that you were having pain in your right knee. To allow your care team to better meet your needs at the appointment, they are requesting you fill out a previsit questionnaire. Complete this questionnaire. Fill it out like you would be filling out a for first form.
- Things to watch/listen for
 - *Did the Veteran successfully completed the task. Success = getting to the screen with the "Your questionnaire has been sent to your provider." alert box.*
 - *Did the Veteran immediately click the sign in button on the introduction page or did they take time to review the introduction page?*
 - *Pay attention to Veteran commentary on confusing or pleasing portions of the questionnaire.*
 - *Take note of anything the Veteran suggests to add.*

Research questions: Introduction page

- *Ask if the Veteran didn't review the entire page during the Usability Task. I saw that you immediately clicked the sign in button during the first activity. Take some time now and review the rest of the page.*
- What are your impressions of this page?
- What are your thoughts about the information provided? Is it what you were expecting or not expecting?
 - in “How will VA protect...”?
 - in the blue box (don’t use for emergencies)?
 - in “What happens after I answer...”?
- Is there any other information we should include here?

The screenshot displays the VA website's interface for the 'Answer questions for your upcoming appointment' page. The main content area features a title, a sub-header 'Douglas VA Medical Center', and a paragraph explaining the purpose of the questionnaire. A note indicates that account details can be used to prefill questions. A section titled 'How will VA protect my personal and health information if I answer these questions?' lists privacy measures. Another section, 'What happens after I answer the questions?', explains the review process. A sidebar on the right shows a mobile view of the same page, highlighting the 'Answer questions' button.

Research questions: Veteran info page

- Do you feed that VA.gov typically has the correct demographic information for you?
- Have you ever updated your contact information?
 - If so, can you tell me about the process? Where did you update it? How did it go?
 - If updating online, would you want to update it in this questionnaire or within a profile section?

The image shows a screenshot of the VA.gov website. The main header is dark blue with the VA logo and 'U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs'. Below the header, there's a navigation bar with links like 'VA Benefits and Health Care', 'About VA', 'Find a VA Location', 'My VA', and 'My Health'. The main content area is titled 'Answer questions for your upcoming appointment' and 'Douglas VA Medical Center'. It shows 'Step 1 of 3: Veteran information'. The form displays personal information for Hector J Allen, including date of birth, gender, mailing address, residential address, and phone numbers. There are 'Back' and 'Continue' buttons. A green message box says 'Form has been saved. Last saved on 08/08/2020 at 10:41 a.m.' There's a 'Need help?' section with contact information for the VA.gov Technical Help Desk. On the right side, there's a sidebar with a 'Menu' button and a 'Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now' button. The sidebar also shows the same 'Answer questions for your upcoming appointment' title and 'Douglas VA Medical Center' location.

Research questions: This visit page

Tell the Veteran before asking questions on this page. This is the first version of these questions. We plan to expand this form, so you could review your mediations, allergies, medical conditions, and more prior to an appointment.

- What are your impressions of this page?
- Do you see value or no value in sharing this information with your primary care provider?
- How would you expect your doctor or primary care provider to use this information?
- Do you feel the in-person part of your appointment with the doctor/nurse will be different after providing this information ahead of time?
- *If they didn't edit the "additional details" field, why didn't you edit the additional details question?*
- *If not explicitly mentioned, if you have a lot of questions for your visit, do you think ranking the questions here would help get your most important questions answered first?*
- Should your questionnaire answers automatically appear in your next upcoming appointment questionnaire as a reminder of what you wanted to discuss/discussed with your provider, then you can make edits? Do you think the information that you enter for these questions will differ drastically each time, so it isn't worth transferring that information to the new questionnaire?

The screenshot shows the top portion of a web form. At the top, there is a header with the VA logo and the text 'U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs'. Below this is a navigation bar with links for 'Search', 'Contact Us', and 'Hector'. The main heading of the form is 'Answer questions for your upcoming appointment' with a sub-heading 'Douglas VA Medical Center'. The form is divided into sections by horizontal lines. The first section is titled 'Step 2 of 3: Prepare for your visit'. Below this, there is a section titled 'What's the reason for your visit?' with the text 'Annual physical exam'. This is followed by a question: 'Are there any additional details you'd like to share with your provider about this appointment? (*Required)'. Below this question is a text input field containing the text 'Pain in right knee'. The next section asks: 'Are there any other concerns or changes in your life that are affecting you or your health? (For example, a marriage, divorce, new baby, change in your job, or other medical conditions)'. Below this is a larger text input field. The final section is titled 'Additional questions for your provider' and asks: 'Do you have a question you want to ask your provider? Please enter your most important question first.' Below this is another text input field. At the bottom of the form, there is a button labeled 'Add Another Question'.

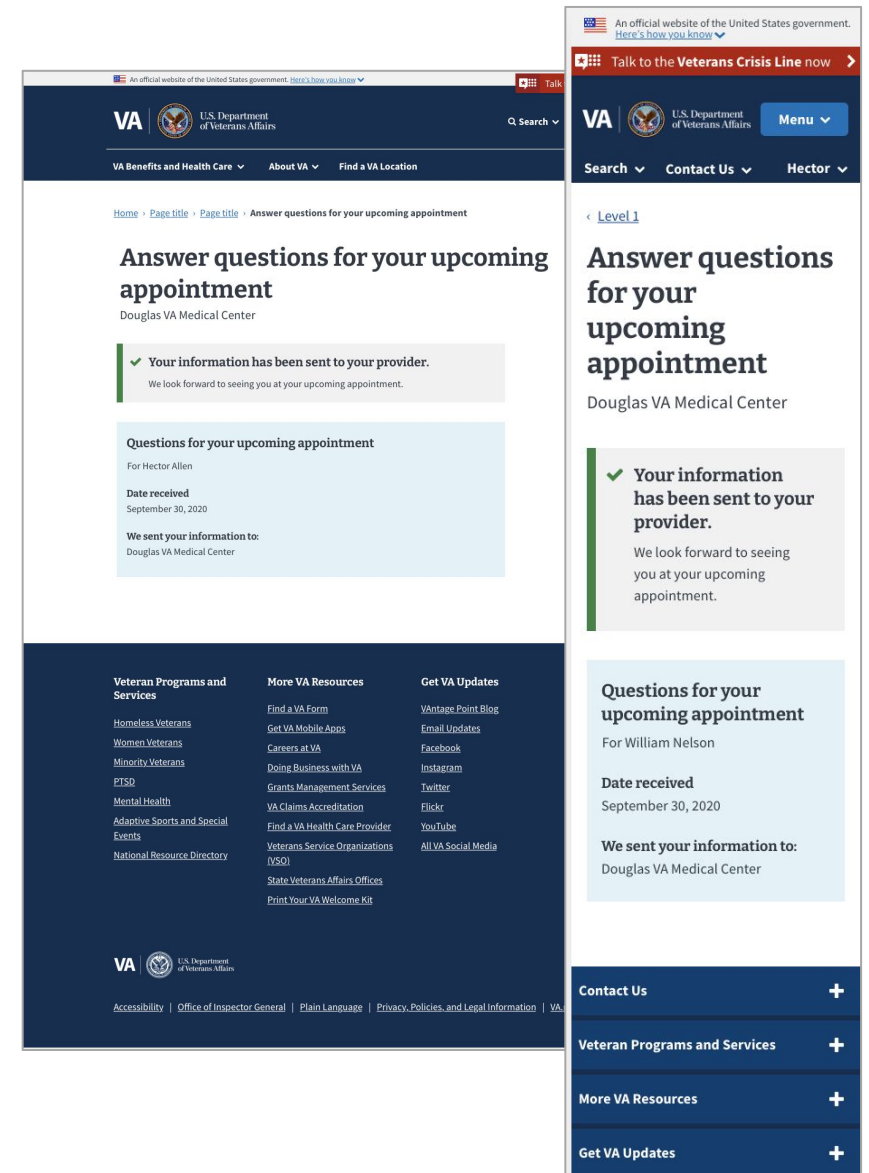
Research questions: Review and confirmation page

Review page

- What are your impressions of this page?

Confirmation page

- What are your impressions of this page?
- Once you submit this questionnaire, who do you expect will have access to the answers that you entered? - Is it what you were expecting or not expecting?
- Is there any other information we should include here? Anything about what to bring to your appointment or how to contact?
- Where would you like to navigate to next after completing this form?



Research questions: Follow-up questions

- Where on VA.gov would you expect all of your healthcare questionnaires to live?
- Would you fill out this questionnaire?
- Would you fill it out on a desktop or phone?
- When would you fill out this questionnaire? (How many days before your appointment?)
- How would you have liked to receive a notification that you had this questionnaire to complete?
- Are there any topics or questions you'd like to see that weren't included in today's exercise?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Research Findings

Key Findings

1. Nurses, who normally ask intake questions, are less (or not at all) involved in virtual appointments.
2. The usability and value of our questionnaire was reconfirmed.
3. All of the Veterans almost immediately clicked to the next page without reviewing any content on the introduction page.
4. Experiences when updating demographic information differed amongst the Veterans, but Veterans see the profile as the place of authority on VA.gov to edit their demographic information.
5. Veteran expectations on when providers would review this information differed, so their expectations on when they would complete this questionnaire also varied.
6. Veterans expect access to their completed questionnaires and other medical information shared with the VA.
7. Veterans expect to find and be notified of questionnaires to complete in a variety of ways.

Research Findings

Nurses, who normally ask intake questions, are less (or not at all) involved in virtual appointments.

- We asked each Veteran to discuss their recent experience at a VA appointment.
 - Six Veterans had virtual appointments, since COVID started.
 - Most veterans described logging into their virtual appointment, waiting in a virtual waiting room, then immediately talking to the doctor.
 - A small percentage shared that a nurse called them a few days in advance of their virtual appointment to ask “normal” intake questions.

Intake questions address why the Veteran has come to the appointment, what symptoms they are experiencing, changes to their medical/social history, changes to medications, etc.

Research Findings

The usability and value of our questionnaire was reconfirmed.

- All of the Veterans made it through the questionnaire without problems.
 - There were no real differences seen between desktop and mobile as well.
- They also thought it would help focus their appointments on their areas of interest.

“The more information that you give your primary care the more opportunity they will have to get it right.”

“I see a lot of value.”

The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) website, specifically the 'Answer questions for your upcoming appointment' form. The left screenshot shows the desktop version, and the right screenshot shows the mobile version.

Desktop View (Left):

- Header:** Includes the VA logo, 'U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs', a search bar, and navigation links: 'VA Benefits and Health Care', 'About VA', and 'Find a VA Location'.
- Breadcrumbs:** Home > Page title > Page title > Answer questions for your upcoming appointment
- Title:** Answer questions for your upcoming appointment
- Location:** Douglas VA Medical Center
- Text:** To help us better prepare for your appointment, fill out this short questionnaire about your upcoming visit. This is where you can give us more detail about your appointment or let us know if there are any specific health issues you want to discuss with your provider.
- Note:** Since you're signed in to your account, we can prefill part of your questions based on your account details. You can also save your questions in progress and come back later to finish filling it out.
- Buttons:** 'Answer questions' (green)
- Section:** How will VA protect my personal and health information if I answer these questions?
- Text:** Like your medical record, we'll keep the information you enter in the questionnaire private.
- Section:** To protect your privacy and your personal and health information, we:
- Share your information only with your provider
 - Store all information in our secure electronic systems, and encrypt all sensitive data
 - Require all VA employees who handle sensitive data to take required training and ongoing education courses on privacy and data security
- Note:** If you need to talk to someone right away or need emergency care,
 - Call 911, or
 - Call the Veterans Crisis hotline at 800-273-8255 and select 1
- Section:** What happens after I answer the questions?
- After you answer the questions, your questionnaire will be securely sent to your provider for review. The questionnaire will also be added to your medical record. Please try to submit the questionnaire [X] days before your appointment.

You and your provider will discuss the information on your questionnaire during your appointment.
- Buttons:** 'Answer questions' (green)

Mobile View (Right):

- Header:** Includes the VA logo, 'U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs', a search bar, and navigation links: 'Menu', 'Search', 'Contact Us', and 'Hector'.
- Breadcrumbs:** < Level 1
- Title:** Answer questions for your upcoming appointment
- Location:** Douglas VA Medical Center
- Section:** Step 2 of 3: Prepare for your visit
- Section:** What's the reason for your visit?
- Annual physical exam
- Are there any additional details you'd like to share with your provider about this appointment? (*Required)
-
- Are there any other concerns or changes in your life that are affecting you or your health? (For example, a marriage, divorce, new baby, change in your job, or other medical conditions)
-
- Section:** Additional questions for your provider
- Do you have a question you want to ask your provider? Please enter your most important question first.
-

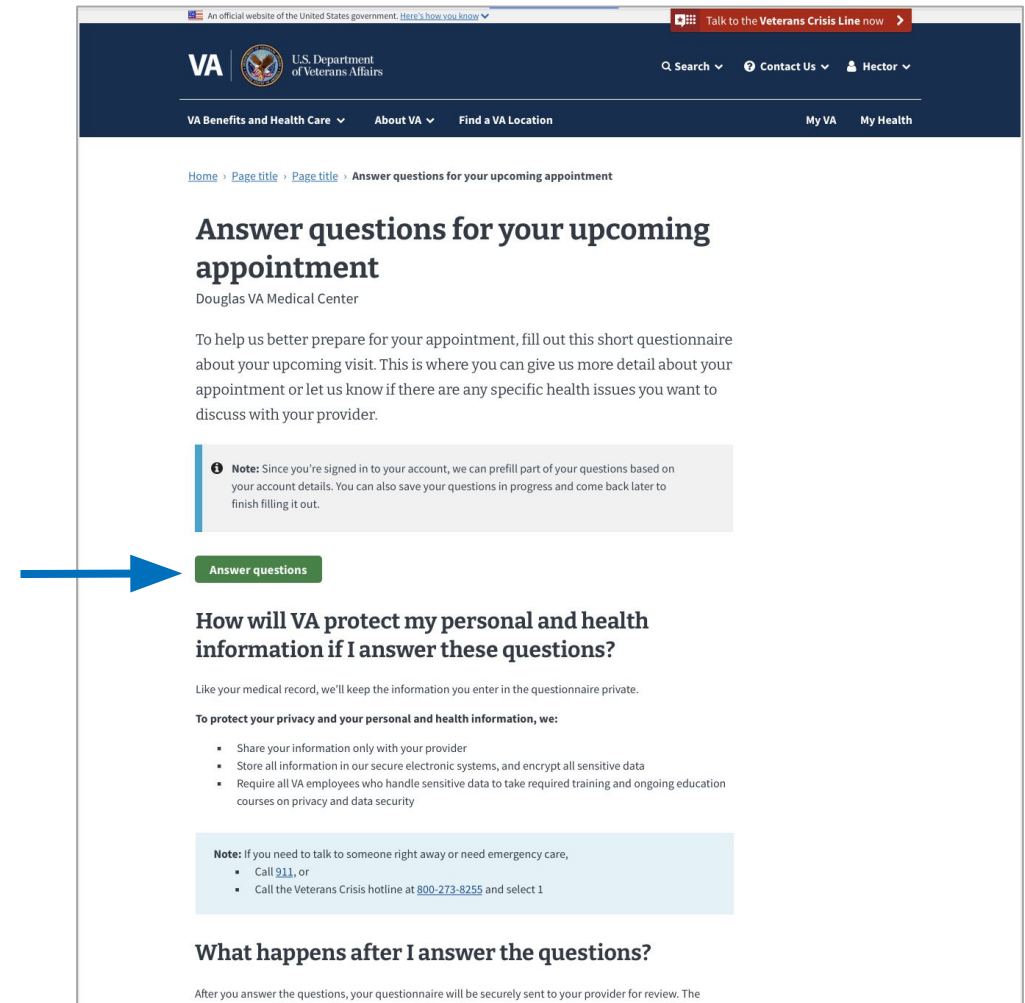
Research Findings

All of the Veterans almost immediately clicked to the next page without reviewing any content on the introduction page.

- Only a small percentage of Veterans even quickly scrolled up and down the page.
- When prompted to review the content, most Veterans found...
 - the “What happens after I answer the questions?” section valuable information to understand.
 - all of the other content resulted in the following comments:

“It is what I expect from a government website.”

“I never read all this stuff.”



Research Findings

Experiences when updating demographic information differed amongst the Veterans.

- Six Veterans described experiences updating their demographic information at the VA.
- The methods used to change their demographic information varied:
 - VA.gov
 - When checking into a medical appointment
 - Going to registration at a VA facility
- Addresses and phone numbers were most often mentioned as the information they updated.
- Some of the difficulties faced when making the changes included:
 - being routed to multiple departments within a building before being successful.
 - the change didn't populate to all of the VA departments that they interact with.

Research Findings

Veterans see the profile section as the place of authority on VA.gov to edit their demographic information.

- Six out of six Veterans stated that they wanted to edit within a profile section, because they thought the changes would disseminate further across the VA from a profile section.

The image displays two versions of the VA.gov website interface for the 'Answer questions for your upcoming appointment' form. The left screenshot shows the desktop version, and the right screenshot shows the mobile version.

Desktop Version (Left):

- Header:** Includes the VA logo, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and navigation links: Search, Contact Us, Hector.
- Breadcrumbs:** Home > Page title > Page title > Answer questions for your upcoming appointment
- Title:** Answer questions for your upcoming appointment
- Location:** Douglas VA Medical Center
- Progress:** Step 1 of 3: Veteran information
- Text:** You have an upcoming appointment at Douglas VA medical center at 12:30 p.m. on August 15, 2020. Below is the personal and contact information we have on file for you.
- Form Fields:**
 - Hector J Allen**
 - Date of birth: January 10, 1980
 - Gender: Male
 - Mailing address: 1221 Douglas Way, Douglas, MA 00000
 - Residential address: 15431 Boston Road Apt 1C, Boston, MA 00000
 - Home phone: 555-555-5555
 - Mobile phone: 555-555-5555
 - Work phone: 555-555-5555
- Note:** If you need to update your personal information, please call Veterans Benefits Assistance at 800-827-1000, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.
- Buttons:** « Back, Continue »
- Confirmation:** Form has been saved. Last saved on 08/08/2020 at 10:41 a.m.
- Footer:** Finish this form later, Need help? For help filling out this form, or if the form isn't working right, please call the VA.gov Technical Help Desk at 844-698-2311.

Mobile Version (Right):

- Header:** Includes the VA logo, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and navigation links: Search, Contact Us, Hector.
- Breadcrumbs:** < Level 1
- Title:** Answer questions for your upcoming appointment
- Location:** Douglas VA Medical Center
- Progress:** Step 1 of 3: Veteran information
- Text:** You have an upcoming appointment at Douglas VA medical center at 12:30 p.m. on August 15, 2020. Below is the personal and contact information we have on file for you.
- Form Fields:**
 - Hector J Allen**
 - Date of birth: January 10, 1980
 - Gender: Male

Research Findings

Veteran expectations on when providers would review this information differed.

- Half of the Veterans expected their providers were reading their questionnaire responses well in advance of the appointment.
- They were particularly interested in hearing about any labs or tests that the provider thought they should have, then scheduling and completing said test prior to the actual appointment.

“This would be nice. I know that they are very busy though. Maybe the nurse can review it and highlight things, then talk to the doctor?”

Research Findings

Veteran expectations on when they would complete this questionnaire varied.

- The half of the Veterans who expected their providers to read their questionnaire early gave longer lead times on when they wanted to fill out their questionnaires, such as 60 days in advance.
- The other half of Veterans tended to mention times between two weeks to 2 days in advance that they would fill out this questionnaire.
- A few Veterans mentioned wanting to update this questionnaire multiple times if their health status changed, particularly for appointments that are scheduled months or a year in advance.

Two Veterans initially assumed these questions were part of the appointment scheduling process.

Research Findings

Veterans expect access to their completed questionnaires and other medical information shared with the VA.

- All of the Veterans did not have any issues with their submission going directly to their providers and into their medical record.
 - Veterans started to talk about other medical information that they wanted to see, such as provider notes from an appointment.
- Once a Veteran completed the questionnaire, they seemed equally interested in seeing additional information about this appointment (or other upcoming appointments) as other questionnaires that they need to complete.

Research Findings

Veterans expected to find and be notified of questionnaires to complete in a variety of ways.

- Veterans equally expected their questionnaires to live with their other medical record information, their upcoming appointment information, or both.
- Three Veterans also saw this connected to myHealtheVet or living on myHealtheVet.
- Main dashboard page notifications about other questionnaires to complete were seen as beneficial.
- Veterans also wanted to be notified via email and/or text.

Research Findings

Without prompting, two Veterans wanted to add the ability to send images along with this questionnaire.

- They discussed the benefits of sending an image when dealing with a dermatological issue or to better explain where their pain was occurring.

“A picture is worth a thousand words.”

Research Findings

Veterans had numerous ideas on features to add to the questionnaire.

- Some of the various ideas included:
 - a visual of the human body, so the Veteran could indicate their area of concern or where they have pain.
 - phone numbers on the confirmation page to get questions answered about their appointment. (6 out of 8 Veterans liked this idea.)
 - a read receipt/status, so the Veteran would know when their provider reviewed the questionnaire.
 - being able to see the provider's name.

“So I know who is viewing my data. I get concerned about that sometimes. It would also be good to know who exactly I’m seeing for that appointment.”

Additional findings: This visit page

- Three Veterans didn't think that they could or should edit the additional details questions.
 - Only two Veterans edited this field during the usability task.
- Six Veterans thought prioritizing could help get their most important questions answered first.
- Veterans are split on whether transferring information from one questionnaire to the next was valuable or not.
 - Some Veterans said to provide the option, while some described limiting transfers to follow-up appointments, similar appointment types, or the same doctor.
- Two Veterans wanted to additional questions to appear based upon what was written in the additional details question.
 - For instance, if you wrote about pain, then other questions would appear asking where is the pain located, has the pain recently gotten worse, what kind of pain is it, etc?

The screenshot shows the VA website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the VA logo, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and a 'Menu' dropdown. Below the navigation bar, there's a section titled 'Answer questions for your upcoming appointment' for the Douglas VA Medical Center. The form is at 'Step 2 of 3: Prepare for your visit'. It asks 'What's the reason for your visit?' with 'Annual physical exam' entered. It then asks 'Are there any additional details you'd like to share with your provider about this appointment? (*Required)' with 'Pain in right knee' entered. Below that, it asks 'Are there any other concerns or changes in your life that are affecting you or your health? (For example, a marriage, divorce, new baby, change in your job, or other medical conditions)' with a large empty text box. At the bottom, it asks 'Additional questions for your provider' with 'Do you have a question you want to ask your provider? Please enter your most important question first.' and an empty text box. There is an 'Add Another Question' button at the very bottom.

Additional findings: Review page

- All of the Veterans expected this page to exist and to have the ability to edit their answers here.
 - One Veteran had such a strong association with editing that they wanted to remove the demographic information, because it was read only.

“I already reviewed the information earlier on in the form.”

- Two Veterans wanted more descriptive address labels on this page, such as mailing and home.

The screenshot shows the VA website's review page for an upcoming appointment at the Douglas VA Medical Center. The page is titled 'Step 3 of 3: Review' and contains two main sections: 'Veteran Information' and 'Prepare for Your Appointment'. The 'Veteran Information' section displays a form with the following details: Name (Hector J Allen), Date of birth (01/10/1980), Gender (Male), Country (USA), Street address 1 (1221 Douglas Way), Street address 2 (-), City (Douglas), State (Rhode Island), Postal code (00000), Street address 1 (5947 W Patty Lane), Street address 2 (-), City (Lincoln), State (Rhode Island), and Postal code (00000). The 'Prepare for Your Appointment' section includes an 'Edit' button and a list of questions: 'What's the reason for your visit?' (Annual physical exam), 'Are there any additional details you'd like to share with your provider about this appointment?' (Pain in right knee), and 'Are there any other concerns or changes'.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Benefits and Health Care | About VA | Find a VA Location | My VA | My Health

Home > Page title > Page title > Answer questions for your upcoming appointment

Answer questions for your upcoming appointment

Douglas VA Medical Center

Step 3 of 3: Review

Veteran Information

Name	Hector J Allen
Date of birth	01/10/1980
Gender	Male
Country	USA
Street address 1	1221 Douglas Way
Street address 2	-
City	Douglas
State	Rhode Island
Postal code	00000
Street address 1	5947 W Patty Lane
Street address 2	-
City	Lincoln
State	Rhode Island
Postal code	00000

Prepare for Your Appointment

Edit

What's the reason for your visit? Annual physical exam

Are there any additional details you'd like to share with your provider about this appointment? Pain in right knee

Are there any other concerns or changes

Recommendations

Recommendations: Changes to MVP scope

Changes that can be completed by the product team

- Remove the button to start the questionnaire from the top of the introduction page.
- Reorder the introduction page content, so “What happens after I answer the questions?” is listed first.
- Add the information that a provider will not review this questionnaire with the Veteran until their appointment in more locations and add more visual emphasis to it.
- When determining how far in advance a Veteran can complete this questionnaire, take the two week to 2 day Veteran-proposed timeframe in mind.
- Add links to the Questionnaire Manager and VAOS on our confirmation page.
- Add VAMC and clinic phone numbers to the confirmation page.

Recommendations: Changes to MVP scope

- When working with IA to determine where our questionnaires live on VA.gov propose they live amongst all of the other medical record information.
 - VAOS would link to specific questionnaires.
- Change the additional details field to a textarea in order to help Veterans believe they can edit this information.
- Add more descriptive address labels on the review page.

Changes to work with platform on

- Remove the button to start the questionnaire from the top of the introduction page.

Recommendations: Additions to future roadmap

Additions that can be explored by the product team

- Explore adding other questionnaire information to the confirmation page.
- Further look into the need to transfer information entered in one questionnaire into the next questionnaire.
- Look into a branching strategy (or machine learning) for questions, so we can probe further into problems that Veterans are facing.

Additions to explore by working with other VA.gov product teams

- Work with VAOS, authenticated and mobile teams to have questionnaire information appropriately appear.
- Explore adding more detailed widgets of appointment to the confirmation page.

Recommendations: Additions to future roadmap

Additions to explore by working with platform (possible holistic changes)

- Explore elegant solutions for jumping from questionnaires to the profile section to update demographic information or add editing demographic information in the questionnaire.
 - Should all forms have editable demographics or link to the profile section? Are the labels in the demographic sections consistent in all forms (within the main content area and the review pages)?
- Explore the possibility of editing a questionnaire multiple times.
 - Enhancement to save in-progress
- Explore adding the capability to send images.
- Add provider's name to questionnaire.

Next Steps

Next Steps

Update MVP wireframes based upon findings

Present updates to the team and create tickets for engineering to implement the changes

Review items for future roadmap

Discuss with the team about adding topics to roadmap for future exploration

Appendix
