

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

My VA Dashboard Redesign Research Synthesis

Discovery Readout

Background & Goals

Goals of MyVA

- **Reduce redundancy** — Specifically, we should reduce redundancy between the My VA dashboard and the VA.gov homepage. This will happen in phases. As we redesign and re-launch the My VA dashboard, this frees up the homepage to be less task-management focused. As the homepage evolves away from a task management focus, it will be less redundant with My VA so both the homepage and My VA will have their own clear, unique purposes. However, in order for the homepage to evolve, we have to redesign My VA first.
- **Elevate personally relevant information** — Users should more easily be able to scan/evaluate their information.
- **Scale gracefully** — Our designs should allow for future updates and expansion, as new features are being added to VA.gov all the time.
- **Prioritize wayfinding** — We should make it easy for users to find the My VA dashboard.
- **Effectively use visual space** — We should avoid a single-column, "content page" approach. Design updates should more effectively employ the design system and update it as needed.

Methodology

Methodology

Method (e.g. Qualitative interviews)

We conducted remote moderated usability testing via Zoom using the Perigean contract. This method allowed us to share a high-fidelity prototype. Users were asked to join using their mobile devices (android, iphone and samsung) - but some joined via a laptop or an ipad.

Who we talked to

- 8 Veterans
- Ages varied from 35-65 (exact demographics unknown)
- All 8 veterans were currently disabled (ranging from 10%-100%)
- 5 out of 8 veterans were currently enrolled and using health care through the VA
- All 8 veterans were currently receiving some type of benefit (retirement, health care, GI bill etc)
- 4 out of 8 veterans had cognitive considerations
- 8 out of 8 veterans managed their benefits online (using primarily MHV and ebenefits)

[Mobile prototype](#)

Research Findings

Key Findings - what worked

1. Users easily found the information that they were looking for and completed tasks. Overall, the information we have on My VA seems helpful.
2. All users stated that My VA met or exceeded their expectations.
3. There was a tie on preferring the homepage to My VA (4 to 4), but many participants mentioned how much they appreciated the personalization of My VA.
4. People generally understood the difference between the My VA dashboard and the Profile, and they were able to accurately describe the profile in their own words.
5. All users easily found and understood the disability rating and how to get more information on their disability ratings.
6. Users found the grey boxes in appointments and claims & appeals to be useful.
7. Users easily understood the applications in progress section and how to complete and submit an application.

Claims & appeals

Claim for compensation received date: June 7, 1999

- ✓ Status: Evidence gathering, review,
and decision We sent you a
development letter

[View details](#)

 [4 claims or appeals in progress >](#)

Appointments

Next appointment

Monday, November 12, 2020

Time: 9:00 a.m. ET

VA Video Connect

 [6 upcoming appointments >](#)

Key Findings - what DIDN'T work

1. Users wanted My VA to be more 'actionable'. Users mentioned wanting to see specific CTAs on the page like 'Schedule an appointment' and 'Send message'. There was also some talk about *why* we are showing the information in the grey boxes if they cannot do anything with it. We may want to continue exploring how we can more effectively prompt people to take action.

"Give me more interactivity, if I can't do anything about it then I don't want to see it."

"Well, where it says appointments I would have schedule and view appointments... if I am already seeing something here then it should allow me to schedule and view at this point instead of going somewhere else to schedule."

- **Recommendation:** Since the specific CTAs that users requested go to the same page (Schedule an appointment' and 'Cancel appointment' will both go to VAOS) - my recommendation is remove the total number from the CTA's and to update the verbiage of the CTA in all sections to be something along the lines of 'Manage all X'.

Key Findings - what DIDN'T work

2. No participants had a firm understanding of the 'totals' displayed on the page in all sections. Most users thought that the total was the the information in the grey box PLUS the number in the CTA. There was a lot of confusion around the CTA's and the grey boxes and what their relation was to each other. Some users thought that the total number was displayed in the CTA, but they were often unsure about their assumption. All users understood that the links would take them to a separate page with additional information, but 3 users mentioned they would like to see more specific CTA's on the page (i.e. schedule an appointment, cancel an appointment, send message)

- **Recommendation:** It seemed like most of the confusion came from the combination of the grey box and the total. I recommend removing the total number from the CTA's for now, except for in messages (users found that to be useful). This is not a 'forever' fix - this should definitely be iterated on to find a better solution to relay this information.



Key Findings - what DIDN'T work

3. Many users mentioned that they did not need the grey boxes in messages and prescriptions, they found it confusing and redundant. They just wanted to see how many messages they had and have the ability to see all of the information about their prescriptions and manage that information, additional details were not helpful to them.

"That is all I would really care about...(referring to the message total) is that I have a response or that I need to read the messages in regard to whatever I've been waiting for."

"Get rid of the grey box, I don't need it. I just want to get to where I can do something. Make it linkable."

- **Recommendation:** I recommend removing the grey boxes in messages and prescriptions - this will cut down on confusion on 'totals' as well.

Messages

Latest message

From: Dr. Susan Smith

Date: January 22, 2021

Subject: We recieved your most recent lab results ...

 [2 unread messages](#) >

Prescriptions

Prescription update

Metformin, 500mg

Status: Submitted on
Monday, March 11, 2021

 [3 prescription refills](#) >

Key Findings - what DIDN'T work

4. All users were confused with the verbiage and information shown in the prescriptions sections.

Users were very confused about what 'Prescription update' meant. All users did not understand what '3 prescription refills' meant, and many of them did not understand the relationship between the prescription in the grey box and the number in the CTA. Some people thought that the information presented meant that the prescription in the box had 3 refills left, and others thought that the prescription in the grey box was a refill and they had 3 additional refills happening.

"Well see... when I looked at it I didn't know if it meant it was three refills of metformin or if I have other prescriptions that are in a refill status. For example, I get Vitamin D and one other so that is three refills right there... would it give me the status of all of them or is that just for metformin? I honestly just don't know."

- **Recommendation:** I recommend removing the grey box in prescriptions as well as not displaying a total for prescriptions. With our current functionality, we cannot show users what is really useful to them (i.e. when their prescription will arrive or if they need to take action on a prescription). I recommend the prescription section should just be a simple link to 'Manage all prescriptions'. This should remove all confusion around this section while still quickly and effectively getting users to their prescription information.

Key Findings - what DIDN'T work

5. No users were able to find My VA in the Menu dropdown on their own. All users said they would look in the homepage links to find updates to benefits. Given that we were using an InVision prototype and not testing in code, it's unclear whether people easily found things just because we were already on My VA or whether they'd have as easy a time if we started them somewhere else on VA.gov. We should test this in follow-up sessions once My VA is live.

- **Recommendation:** I do not have an immediate recommendation at this time, this needs to be tested further since we cannot fully assess if this was because of where users started in the prototype.

Key Findings - what DIDN'T work

6. Users generally understood the 'Apply for benefits' section, but were confused about why we were showing the benefit in 'Benefits you might be interested in'. People understood that this was a benefit that they were not currently receiving. There was some confusion around *why* we were showing it, but this wasn't a massive usability issue on the page overall. Some people thought that maybe it had something to do with their eligibility, but people generally understood that this was something the VA wanted to get in front of them.

Also, multiple users mentioned wanting the 'What benefits does the VA offer' dropdown be made more visible.

"'What benefits does the VA offer'... but I would move that to the top because it gets lost. Maybe on the right hand side a resource tab, it may be harder on the phone, I am desktop oriented but it is rare that I would get down this far."

- **Recommendation:** I recommend moving the 'What benefits does the VA offer' dropdown up further on the page or make it more visible visually. As far as the confusion around why we were showing the benefit in 'Benefits you might be interested in'- no changes need to be made here. This was not a usability issue, users will still be able to sign up for additional benefits as needed. This is also something we should explore and iterate on in the future.

Recommendations

Recommendations

This recommendations are not final, and should be iterated on over time.

1. Remove grey boxes in messages and prescriptions.
2. Keep totals for messages, but remove totals for appointments, claims and prescriptions. Replace with a 'Manage all X' CTA.
3. Update CTA verbiage to be more actionable (i.e. Manage all prescriptions) in all sections.
4. Make the 'What benefits does the VA offer' dropdown more visible, or move to the top of section.
5. Eventually add in payment history and a notification hub when time/functionality allows.

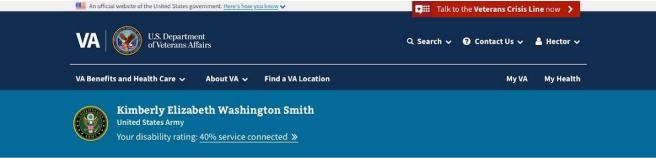
Next Steps

Next Steps

- Make all updates to mobile and desktop prototype
- Make all updates on staging
- Test again with real user information

Design Changes

- [Desktop prototype](#)
- [Mobile prototype](#)



Home > My VA

My VA

[Go to your profile >](#)

Claims & appeals

Claim for compensation received date: June 7, 1999

Status: Evidence gathering, review, and decision
We sent you a development letter

[View details](#)

[Manage all claims & appeals >](#)

Health care

Appointments

Next Appointment

Monday, November 12, 2020
Time: 9:00 a.m. ET
VA Video Connect

[Manage all appointments >](#)

Messages

[View 2 unread messages](#)

Manage your health care benefits

[Manage all your prescriptions >](#)

[Get your lab and test results >](#)

[Get your VA medical records >](#)

Apply for VA benefits

What benefits does the VA offer? [v](#)

Applications in progress

FORM 10-10EZ
Application for title

Application expires on: January 02, 2021
Last opened on: December 12, 2020

[Continue application](#)

FORM 10-10EZ
Application for title

Application expires on: January 02, 2021
Last opened on: December 12, 2020

[Continue application](#)

VA benefits you might be interested in

Education benefits

VA education benefits help Veterans, service members, and their qualified family members with needs like finding the right school or training program and paying tuition.

[Apply for education benefits](#)



Home > My VA

My VA

[Go to your profile >](#)

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[Manage all your prescriptions >](#)

[Get your lab and test results >](#)

[Get your VA medical records >](#)

Apply for VA benefits

What benefits does the VA offer? [v](#)

Applications in progress

FORM 10-10EZ
Application for health care

Application expires on: January 7, 2021
Last opened on: December 12, 2020

[Continue application](#)

FORM 21-0781
Application for disability compensation

Application expires on: January 1, 2021
Last opened on: November 10, 2020

[Continue application](#)

VA benefits you might be interested in

Education benefits

VA education benefits help Veterans, service members, and their qualified family members with needs like finding the right school or training program and paying tuition.

[Apply for education benefits](#)



Appendix

Links

[Product outline](#)

[Research Findings](#)

[Conversation Guide](#)

[Prototype](#)