

Patient Check-In (PCI) Travel Reimbursement Research Report

September 2022

Last updated: October 3, 2022

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Background

The [patient check-in \(PCI\)](#) product is reimagining the ecosystem that allows a Veteran to check in for a medical appointment. The Modernized Check-In Experience Team created the portion of the ecosystem that enables a Veteran to utilize their smartphone to “check in” through VA.gov.

I.e., letting clinic staff know that the patient has arrived for their appointment.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

High level view of the Veteran check-in journey

Pre-check-in

An official website of the United States government.
[Here's how you know](#)

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [Menu](#)

[Search](#) [Contact Us](#) [Sign In](#)

Start pre-check-in

We need to verify your identity so you can start pre-check-in.

Your last name

Last 4 digits of your Social Security number

[Continue](#)

Need help?

For questions about your appointment or if you have a health-related concern, call your VA provider.
[Contact your VA provider.](#)

For questions about how to fill out your pre-check-in tasks or if you need help with the form, please call our MyVA411 main information line at [800-698-2411](#) and select 0. We're here 24/7.

If you have hearing loss, call [TTY: 711](#).

[Contact Us](#) [+](#)

[Veteran Programs and Services](#) [+](#)

[More VA Resources](#) [+](#)

Check-in (day of appointment)

Have an appointment? Check in with your smartphone

- 1 Text check in to 53079 OR scan this code with your camera.

To: 53079
Message: check in


- 2 Wait until you get a text back with a link. This should only take a few seconds.
- 3 Tap on the link to start your check-in. Data charges may apply.

Can't scan the QR code? Text us instead [📄](#)
Need to update your information? Check in with a staff member instead [📄](#)

An official website of the United States government.
[Here's how you know](#)

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [Menu](#)

[Search](#) [Contact Us](#) [Sign In](#)

Check in at VA

We need some information to verify your identity so we can check you in.

Your last name

Last 4 digits of your Social Security number

[Continue](#)

Need help?

Ask a staff member.

[Contact Us](#) [+](#)

[Veteran Programs and Services](#) [+](#)

[More VA Resources](#) [+](#)

[Get VA Updates](#) [+](#)

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

An official website of the United States government.
[Here's how you know](#)

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [Menu](#)

[Search](#) [Contact Us](#) [Sign In](#)

You're checked in for your 1:00 p.m. ET appointment

We'll come get you from the **Cardiology Specialty Red Clinic #4** waiting room when it's time for your appointment to start.

[Go to another appointment](#)

Need help?

Ask a staff member.

[Contact Us](#) [+](#)

[Veteran Programs and Services](#) [+](#)

[More VA Resources](#) [+](#)

[Get VA Updates](#) [+](#)

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



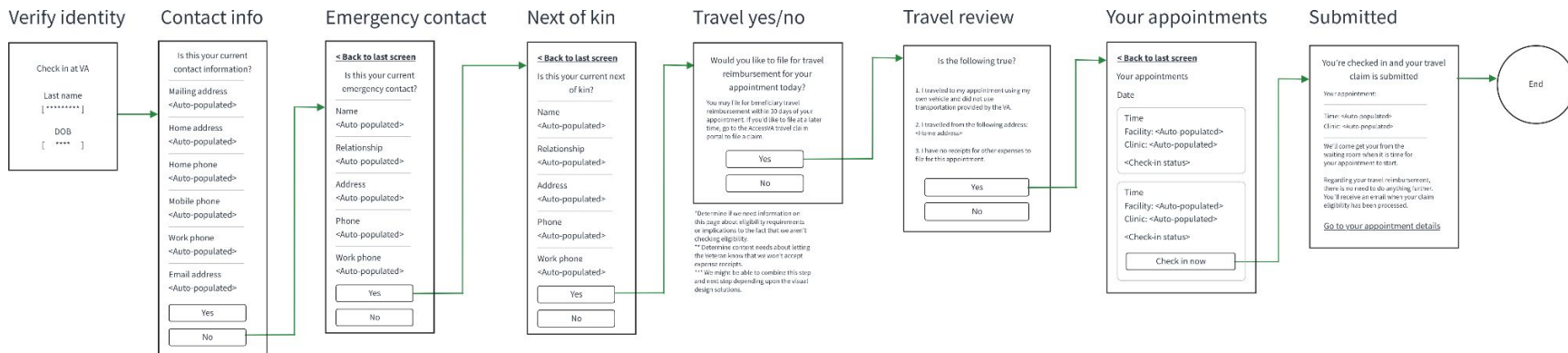
Veteran waits to be seen in the waiting room



Situation

In June 2022, the Beneficiary Travel Reimbursement Path Analysis Team completed a review of the VA general health care travel reimbursement program, which included recommendations on improvements the Veteran experience. One of those recommendations was to integrate travel reimbursement into the patient check-in ecosystem.

As a result of their work, the Modernized Check-In Experience Team began developing user flows and wireframes to visualize the integration and gather feedback from Veterans.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Our questions we're hoping to answer for this research

1. Do Veterans prefer to be asked if they're interested in filing for travel reimbursement as a precursor to reviewing and confirming their eligibility within PCI?
2. Is it confusing to check in for an appointment and submit a travel reimbursement claim at the same time?
3. Does knowing that VA checks travel reimbursement and claim eligibility after a claim has been submitted deter Veterans from filing a travel reimbursement claim?
4. What is the cognitive load required for Veterans when they review and confirm their travel reimbursement claim eligibility?
5. How well or not so well do Veterans understand the status of their submitted claim or how to file a claim later on the PCI application's confirmation page?

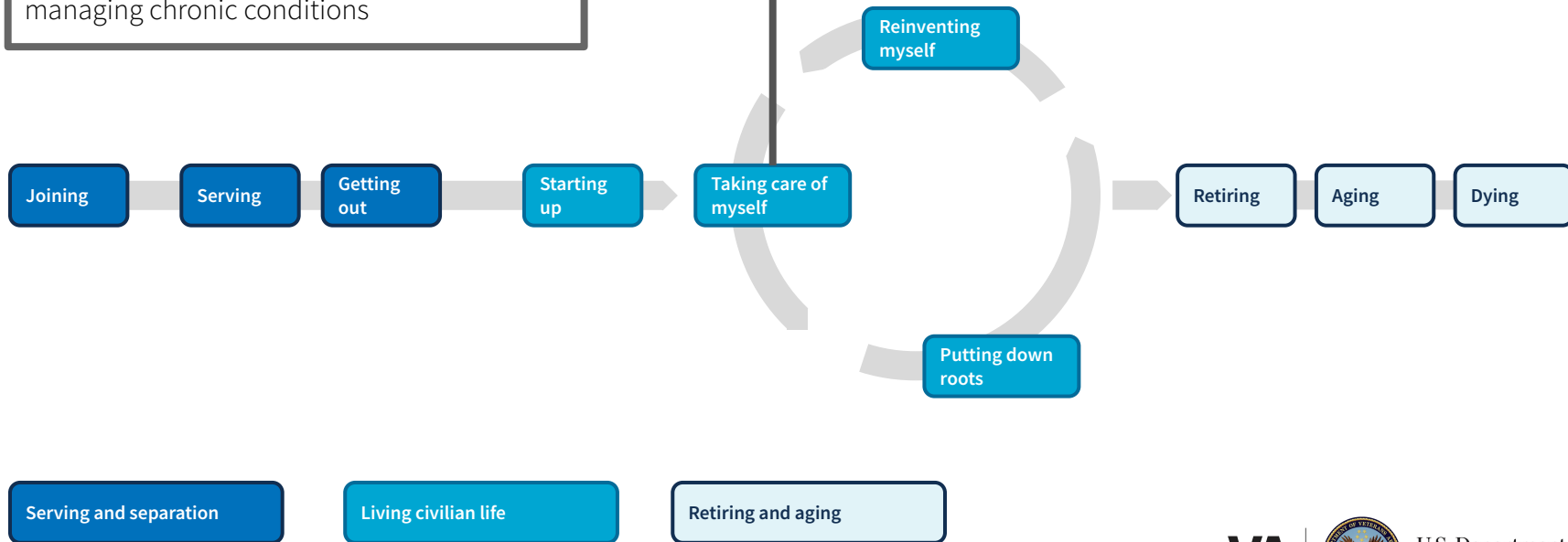


U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

How this research maps to the overall Veteran journey

Moments that matter

Veterans expect to be able to easily check in for their VA medical appointments, whether it's for acute care needs, speciality care or managing chronic conditions



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

OCTO-DE goals that this research supports

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

Methodology

Our research methodology

Veteran Group 1 (10 participants)

Remote, moderated

1. Do Veterans prefer to be asked if they're interested in filing for travel reimbursement as a precursor to reviewing and confirming their eligibility within PCI?

2. Is it confusing to check in for an appointment and submit a travel reimbursement claim at the same time?

3. Does knowing that VA checks travel reimbursement and claim eligibility after a claim has been submitted deter Veterans from filing a travel reimbursement claim?

Prototype A

Prototype B

Veteran Group 2 (10 participants)

Remote, moderated

4. What is the cognitive load required for Veterans when they review and confirm their travel reimbursement claim eligibility?

5. How well or not so well do Veterans understand the status of their submitted claim or how to file a claim later on the PCI application's confirmation page?

Prototype C

Prototype B

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Participant demographics

Findings may not include the perspectives of the following underserved Veteran groups:

- Other than honorable discharge
- Immigrant origin
- Expat (living abroad)
- Hispanic
- Native
- LGBTQ+
- Assistive technology

We recommend studies with these underserved groups in the future.

Participant Tracker in Google Sheets

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X		
2022-08 Travel Reimbursement MVP Remote Usability Test fo																										
final # of participants		20		# of AT users								# of no shows														
Category	%	Target	Study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
Veterans																										
Based on current VA statistics																										
Age 55-64+	50.00%	10	11	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0			
Cognitive Disability	50.00%	10	11	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	N	0	1	N	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0			
Mobile user	50.00%	10	16	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1			
Rural	25.00%	5	8	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	N	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	N	0			
No degree	25.00%	5	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0			
Other than honorable	21.00%	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Immigrant origin	17.00%	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Women	10.00%	2	8	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1			
Expat (living abroad)	0.40%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Race																										
Based on VA's projected statistics																										
Black	15.00%	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	N	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Hispanic	12.00%	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0			
Biracial	3.90%	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0			
Asian	3.00%	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0			
Native	0.30%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
LGBTQ+																										
LGBTQ+ Veterans are 5 times as likely to have PTSD																										
Gay, lesbian, or bisexual	-- %	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0			
Transgender	-- %	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Nonbinary, gender fluid, ge	-- %	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Assistive Tech (AT)																										
Ask an ally specialist to help you complete this. Targets are for a general AT study.																										
Beginner AT User	Null	#VALUE!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Experienced AT User	Null	#VALUE!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Desktop Screen Reader (Sf	Null	#VALUE!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Mobile Screen Reader (SR)	Null	#VALUE!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Magnification/Zoom	Null	#VALUE!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Speech Input Tech (Siri, Dr	Null	#VALUE!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Hearing Aids	Null	#VALUE!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Sighted Keyboard	Null	#VALUE!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Captions	Null	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Switch Device	Null	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Braille Reader	Null	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			

Summary of Key Findings

Summary of key findings

<p>1. Do Veterans prefer to be asked if they're interested in filing for travel reimbursement as a precursor to reviewing and confirming their eligibility within PCI?</p>	<p>Veterans preferred being asked first if they want to file a travel reimbursement claim before being presented with questions to review and confirm eligibility of a claim within the PCI application.</p> <p><i>Of 9 Veterans, 6 thought Prototype A was easier to complete, 1 thought Prototype B was easier to complete and 2 had no preference.</i></p> <p><i>Of 9 Veterans, 6 preferred Prototype A, 2 preferred Prototype B and 1 had no preference.</i></p>
<p>2. Is it confusing to check in for an appointment and submit a travel reimbursement claim at the same time?</p>	<p>No. Veterans thought having the option to file a travel reimbursement claim while checking in for their appointment was easy and convenient.</p> <p><i>Of 9 Veterans, 6 had a positive sentiment, 2 had a neutral or mixed sentiment and 1 had a somewhat negative sentiment for checking in to an appointment and filing a travel reimbursement claim together.</i></p>



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Summary of key findings (cont.)

3. Does knowing that VA checks travel reimbursement and claim eligibility after a claim has been submitted deter Veterans from filing a travel reimbursement claim?

No, knowing that VA checks travel reimbursement and claim eligibility after a claim has been submitted does not stop Veterans from filing a claim. But Veterans felt that VA should already know if they're eligible before allowing them to submit a claim or, at minimum, provide information on how to find out if they're eligible.

Of 9 Veterans, 7 responded no, 1 responded yes and 1 responded with no response that knowing VA checks travel reimbursement and claim eligibility after a claim is submitted would not deter them from filing a travel reimbursement claim.

Summary of key findings (cont.)

4. What is the cognitive load required for Veterans when they review and confirm their travel reimbursement claim eligibility?

Veterans required a very low cognitive load to answer questions related to reviewing and confirming their travel reimbursement claim eligibility. Additionally, Veterans preferred being asked one eligibility question per page.

30 of 32 responses from 8 Veterans answered “5 - shorter amount of time” (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is a longer amount of time and 5 is a shorter amount of time) when asked how much time they would need to answer a question related to reviewing and confirming their travel reimbursement claim eligibility.

Of 7 Veterans, 2 thought Prototype C was easier to complete, 1 thought Prototype B was easier to complete and 4 had no preference.

Of 8 Veterans, 4 preferred Prototype C, 2 preferred Prototype B and 2 had no preference.

Summary of key findings (cont.)

5. How well or not so well do Veterans understand the status of their submitted claim or how to file a claim later on the PCI application's confirmation pages?

Veterans thought the information about the status of their submitted claim or how to file a claim later was easy to understand, but expected more information about when and where to check the status of their claim, who to contact if they have questions and why their travel reimbursement claim couldn't be submitted.

27 of 33 responses from 9 Veterans answered "1 - easy" (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is easy and 5 is difficult) when asked to rate the difficulty of understanding the information on the PCI application's confirmation pages.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Details of Key Findings

1. Do Veterans prefer to be asked if they're interested in filing for travel reimbursement as a precursor to reviewing and confirming their eligibility within PCI?

Veterans preferred being asked first if they want to file a travel reimbursement claim before being presented with questions to review and confirm eligibility of a claim within the PCI application.

- Of 9 Veterans, 6 thought Prototype A was easier to complete, 1 thought Prototype B was easier to complete and 2 had no preference
- Of 9 Veterans, 6 preferred Prototype A, 2 preferred Prototype B and 1 had no preference

Prototype A

The flowchart for Prototype A starts with a 'Check in at VA' screen, followed by a 'Need help?' screen. The main flow is 'Is this your current contact information?' -> 'Filing for travel reimbursement?' -> 'Are all of the following true?' -> 'Your appointments' -> 'You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim'.

Check in at VA
We need some information to verify your identity to check you in.
Your last name
Date of birth (*Required)
Month Day Year
Continue

Need help?
Ask a staff member.

Is this your current contact information?
We can better follow up with you after your appointment when we have your current information.
Mailing address
Home address
Home phone

Filing for travel reimbursement?
We may be able to submit your claim for review today.
Yes
No

Are all of the following true?
Select Yes if all three statements are true.
I traveled to my appointment in my own vehicle. I didn't take any other type of transportation, like a bus or VA transport, and
I traveled from: 1221 Douglas Way, Douglas, MA 01516, and
I don't have to file receipts from other expenses for this appointment (e.g. hotel expenses)

Your appointments
Here are your appointments for today: September 25, 2020.
9:30 a.m. ET
Facility: Cheyenne VA Medical Center
Clinic: Purple-DrAgustin
10:00 a.m. ET
Facility: Cheyenne VA Medical Center
Clinic: Dermatology MOD4 MDS A

You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim
Your appointment:
Time: 12:30 p.m. ET
Clinic: Rheumatology TEAMLET 7/NP
We'll come get you from the waiting room when it's time for your appointment to start.
We'll send you an update about your travel reimbursement.

Prototype B

The flowchart for Prototype B starts with a 'Check in at VA' screen, followed by a 'Need help?' screen. The main flow is 'Is this your current contact information?' -> 'Are all of the following true?' -> 'Your appointments' -> 'You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim'.

Check in at VA
We need some information to verify your identity to check you in.
Your last name
Date of birth (*Required)
Month Day Year
Continue

Need help?
Ask a staff member.

Is this your current contact information?
We can better follow up with you after your appointment when we have your current information.
Mailing address
Home address
Home phone

Are all of the following true?
We may be able to submit your claim for review today.
Select Yes if all three statements are true.
I traveled to my appointment in my own vehicle. I didn't take any other type of transportation, like a bus or VA transport, and
I traveled from: 1221 Douglas Way, Douglas, MA 01516, and
I don't have to file receipts from other

Your appointments
Here are your appointments for today: September 25, 2020.
9:30 a.m. ET
Facility: Cheyenne VA Medical Center
Clinic: Purple-DrAgustin
10:00 a.m. ET
Facility: Cheyenne VA Medical Center
Clinic: Dermatology MOD4 MDS A

You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim
Your appointment:
Time: 12:30 p.m. ET
Clinic: Rheumatology TEAMLET 7/NP
We'll come get you from the waiting room when it's time for your appointment to start.
We'll send you an update about your travel reimbursement.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

2. Is it confusing to check in for an appointment and submit a travel reimbursement claim at the same time?

No. Veterans thought having the option to file a travel reimbursement claim while checking in for their appointment was easy and convenient.

- Of 9 Veterans, 6 had a positive sentiment, 2 had a neutral or mixed sentiment and 1 had a somewhat negative sentiment for checking in to an appointment and filing a travel reimbursement claim together

😊 ***“I like the idea a lot. When I leave the office after my check up, I like that idea of getting it all done right then and there.”***

😊 ***“I really like the simplicity of the process with this. It's a one and done. I can do it while I'm checking in and I won't forget about it. For example, I still have claims from two weeks ago that I still have to put into the application [BTSSS]. But, I really need at least a good 20 minutes solid.”***

😊 ***“Amazing. Nothing comes close to it currently.”***

😊 ***“Very convenient and saves a lot of time. It's fantastic.”***

😊 ***“It's an excellent concept because right now we can't do it. It's very simple and that's good. It's simpler than the kiosk system now.”***

😐 ***“If I were at a medical center trying to do this, it would probably be a bit daunting when I can just go to the desk and check in. If it were a bit fewer steps and more clearly communicated on what's happening in this process, then it would probably be a bit better and it would be great.”***

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

3. Does knowing that VA checks travel reimbursement and claim eligibility after a claim has been submitted deter Veterans from filing a travel reimbursement claim?

No, knowing that VA checks travel reimbursement and claim eligibility after a claim has been submitted does not stop Veterans from filing a claim. But Veterans felt that VA should already know if they're eligible before allowing them to submit a claim or, at minimum, provide information on how to find out if they're eligible.

- Of 9 Veterans, 7 responded no, 1 responded yes and 1 responded with no response that knowing VA checks travel reimbursement and claim eligibility after a claim is submitted would not deter them from filing a travel reimbursement claim

“It wouldn't stop me, but I expect the VA to review my claim right now.”

“No, because I know I've been authorized for it.”

“I'm not quite sure what the actual requirements are for travel reimbursement. So, do you have to live outside a 30 mile radius of your attending VA or community care provider? So, maybe there could be some information about whether you qualify for reimbursement. Because if you go through all of this and don't qualify, then you go back to not having an answer as to why I don't get travel reimbursement.”

“I don't know if I qualify for travel [reimbursement] or not. And, we have a lot of Veterans out there that are qualified, but they don't know they are. If I'm qualified for travel, the app should tell me I'm qualified for it and to file for it. If I'm not qualified for travel, will it still come up or is it set up to know if a Veteran is authorized for travel or not?”

“If you're unsure if you're authorized for travel reimbursement, there should be something that says, “Click here.” Then, explain who is authorized to receive travel reimbursement.”

4. What is the cognitive load required for Veterans when they review and confirm their travel reimbursement claim eligibility?

Veterans required a very low cognitive load to answer questions related to reviewing and confirming their travel reimbursement claim eligibility. Additionally, Veterans preferred being asked one eligibility question per page.

- 30 of 32 responses from 8 Veterans answered “5 - shorter amount of time” (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is a longer amount of time and 5 is a shorter amount of time) when asked how much time they would need to answer a question related to reviewing and confirming their travel reimbursement claim eligibility

4.9
Avg. response

This screen displays a VA mobile app interface. At the top, it says 'An official website of the United States government' and 'Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now'. Below this is a 'VA' logo, 'Sign in', and a 'Menu' button. A 'Back to last screen' link is at the top left. The main heading is 'Are all of the following true?'. Below it, a note says 'We may be able to submit your claim for review today.' A light blue box contains the instruction 'Select Yes if all three statements are true.' followed by two bullet points: 'I traveled to my appointment in my own vehicle. I didn't take any other type of transportation, like a bus or VA transport, and' and 'I traveled from: 1221 Douglas Way Douglas, MA 01516, and'. At the bottom are 'Yes' and 'No' buttons.

“Don't have to file receipts from other expenses for this appointment.” That's a bit ambiguous. I'm not really sure what you're getting at.”

“It's a bit redundant.”

4.5*
Avg. response

This screen displays a VA mobile app interface. At the top, it says 'An official website of the United States government' and 'Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now'. Below this is a 'VA' logo, 'Sign in', and a 'Menu' button. A 'Back to last screen' link is at the top left. The main heading is 'Is this statement true for you?'. Below it, a note says 'I traveled to my appointment in my own vehicle. I didn't take any other type of transportation, like a bus or VA transport'. A light blue box contains an information icon and the text 'If yes, we may be able to submit your claim for travel reimbursement review today.' At the bottom are 'Yes' and 'No' buttons.

“Visually, I like them better separate.”

5.0
Avg. response

This screen displays a VA mobile app interface. At the top, it says 'An official website of the United States government' and 'Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now'. Below this is a 'VA' logo, 'Sign in', and a 'Menu' button. A 'Back to last screen' link is at the top left. The main heading is 'Did you travel from this address?'. Below it, the address '1221 Douglas Way Douglas, MA 01516' is listed. A light blue box contains an information icon and the text 'If yes, we may be able to submit your claim for travel reimbursement review today.' At the bottom are 'Yes' and 'No' buttons.

“Much more concise. I think older Veterans would have an easier time navigating this one. This one was shorter.”

5.0
Avg. response

This screen displays a VA mobile app interface. At the top, it says 'An official website of the United States government' and 'Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now'. Below this is a 'VA' logo, 'Sign in', and a 'Menu' button. A 'Back to last screen' link is at the top left. The main heading is 'Are you filing receipts from other expenses (e.g., hotel)?'. Below it, a light blue box contains an information icon and the text 'If no, we may be able to submit your claim for travel reimbursement review today.' At the bottom are 'Yes' and 'No' buttons.

* One Veteran responded “1 - longer amount of time” to this question, but answered “5 - shorter amount of time” to the remaining questions in Prototype C.

4. What is the cognitive load required for Veterans when they review and confirm their travel reimbursement claim eligibility? (cont.)

Veterans required a very low cognitive load to answer questions related to reviewing and confirming their travel reimbursement claim eligibility. Additionally, Veterans preferred being asked one eligibility question per page.

- Of 7 Veterans, 2 thought Prototype C was easier to complete, 1 thought Prototype B was easier to complete and 4 had no preference
- Of 8 Veterans, 4 preferred Prototype C, 2 preferred Prototype B and 2 had no preference

Prototype C

The Prototype C interface consists of the following steps:

- Check in at VA**: A form asking for the user's last name, date of birth (required), and month/day/year. A "Continue" button is at the bottom.
- Is this your current contact information?**: A form asking for mailing address, home address, and home phone. A "Continue" button is at the bottom.
- Is this statement true for you?**: A question about travel to an appointment. A "Yes" button is highlighted.
- Did you travel from this address?**: A question about the address used for travel. A "Yes" button is highlighted.
- Are you filing receipts from other expenses (e.g., hotel)?**: A question about filing receipts. A "Yes" button is highlighted.
- Your appointments**: A screen showing appointment times (9:30 a.m. ET and 10:00 a.m. ET) and facility names.
- You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim**: A final confirmation screen.

Prototype B

The Prototype B interface consists of the following steps:

- Check in at VA**: A form asking for the user's last name, date of birth (required), and month/day/year. A "Continue" button is at the bottom.
- Is this your current contact information?**: A form asking for mailing address, home address, and home phone. A "Continue" button is at the bottom.
- Are all of the following true?**: A screen with three bullet points asking if the user traveled to an appointment, didn't take any other type of transportation, and filed receipts. A "Select Yes if all three statements are true." button is highlighted.
- Your appointments**: A screen showing appointment times (9:30 a.m. ET and 10:00 a.m. ET) and facility names.
- You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim**: A final confirmation screen.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

5. How well or not so well do Veterans understand the status of their submitted claim or how to file a claim later on the PCI application's confirmation pages?

Veterans thought the information about the status of their submitted claim or how to file a claim later was easy to understand, but expected more information about when and where to check the status of their claim, who to contact if they have questions and why their travel reimbursement claim couldn't be submitted.

- 27 of 33 responses from 9 Veterans answered “1 - easy” (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is easy and 5 is difficult) when asked to rate the difficulty of understanding the information on the PCI application's confirmation pages

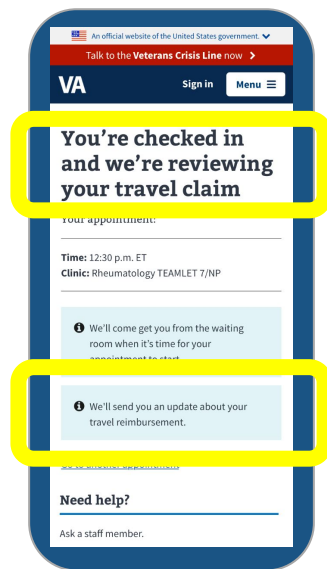
“Since I asked them to do [a] travel [reimbursement claim], I would just have the question on how I would be updated. I guess by email.”

“Who will send an update to me about my travel reimbursement [claim]? I know it's different people at the VA.”

“How are you going to send me an update about my travel reimbursement? Is it by phone, email, text? When can I expect to hear back? Again, I still don't know if you are or if you aren't reviewing. What's the next step after that? Where are you sending me an update to? How will I know if it's submitted? What happens after the review process? It's not giving me any real information.”

“Where are they sending the update about my travel reimbursement? Is it to my email? Or will they send me a text message? Other than that, it's very clear, but I just don't know where it's going. So here, it'd be nice to know where they are sending an update.”

“Usually at the VA if you can't file [on the kiosk], you go to the travel representative and fill out a form and give it to them. If the kiosk doesn't work, that's what I do. I might say, “Please see a travel representative for follow up.””



VA



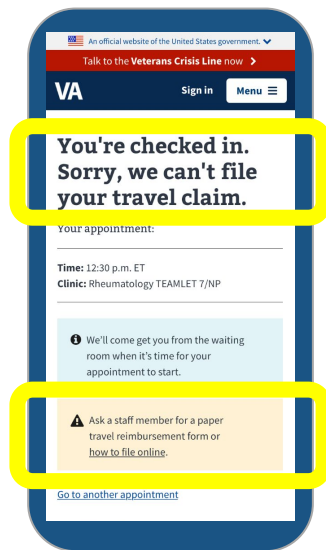
U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

5. How well or not so well do Veterans understand the status of their submitted claim or how to file a claim later on the PCI application's confirmation pages? (cont.)

Veterans thought the information about the status of their submitted claim or how to file a claim later was easy to understand, but expected more information about when and where to check the status of their claim, who to contact if they have questions and why their travel reimbursement claim couldn't be submitted.

- 27 of 33 responses from 9 Veterans answered "1 - easy" (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is easy and 5 is difficult) when asked to rate the difficulty of understanding the information on the PCI application's confirmation pages

"I guess it seems clear, but it doesn't tell you why the benefit [claim] didn't go through and I imagine when it says, "Ask the staff member," they won't tell you why, but instead give you the [paper] form. I might be confused as to why it didn't go through."



VA




U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs


Secondary Findings


Veterans have experienced frustrations with VA general health care travel reimbursement

 *“Currently, I have not been able to submit a travel claim online on my end. There’s some sort of glitch.”*

 *“I get kicked off. I’ll do some work to submit a travel reimbursement online, but it doesn’t save properly. There are too many errors within it. Sometimes I’ll click the button to submit and it doesn’t do anything at all. I’ll do that a couple times, cancel out, go back in and enter most of the information to only find out the next day that the claim was filed five times. And, I never have appointments in my travel app. I always have to screenshot the confirmation page from My HealtheVet that I attended the appointment.”*

 *“I’ve sort of always felt it to be a headache to stop at the travel window on my way out considering I’m only 16 miles from the facility.”*

 *“So, I have to fill out the paper because there’s some sort of glitch with submitting a claim online. So, I have absolutely no idea on if or when it was approved. I just have to guess.”*

 *“We file travel reimbursement through a paper, but never receive any feedback on whether it’s received or denied. I’ve sent in multiple travel reimbursements, but I’ve never received any travel reimbursement.”*

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans often wanted more information to be able to better answer questions, and more decisiveness

“There are a lot of tolls in my area. That’s why it’s difficult [to answer].”

“Here in New York, some people have to take the toll road. How would we submit the receipts for our tolls since we have to pull the bill down, which probably wouldn’t be until the next month or so? I know that would be a question that would come about.”

“Some of my fellow Veterans might not understanding this [statement] because maybe their daughter brought them or friend of the family. So, maybe they can misconstrued this.”

“Will you have a question after if you selected, “No?” For example, did you take public transportation or private apps? I’ve seen a lot of people take Uber, Lift, taxi. It depends on their frailty and disability.”

“Maybe should put, “meals.” I know people that travel from Philadelphia to New York City for their appointments. And, I believe they [VA] cover their meals.”



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans often wanted more information to be able to better answer questions, and more decisiveness (cont.)

“Saying, “We may be able to submit your claim for review today,” is confusing.”

“How do I know if you will or won’t? What am I doing this for if you, “may be able to file my claim today?” What’s the criteria for you to not be able to do it?”

“Well, it says, “We may be able to.” I don’t like to hear a doubt like that. That makes me think it might work or it might not work.”



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Overall, Veterans thought the PCI application was streamlined and easy to use



“I think it’s better to see it in your own hands compared to relying on someone behind the scenes. [I.e., MSAs.] This makes it really clear what appointment you’re coming in for. I like seeing all of your appointments. Like, checking in at the [clinic] desk, you may not know you had all those appointments.”



“It streamlines everything.”



“I’m surprised at how streamlined it looks with the VA website and My HealtheVet. It actually reminded me a lot of My HealtheVet, which is easy to understand.”



“Overall, it’s very similar to the kiosks.”

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans asked about additional functionality

File a claim for a past appointment	Travel reimbursement	<i>"Will it ask if we are claiming for today or last 30 days? That's the only thing I didn't see a question for."</i>
Estimated reimbursement dollar amount	Travel reimbursement	<i>"[Submitting a claim online] typically shows the amount they plan to reimburse. For me, I use community care and the amounts are different depending on locations. So, maybe try to add the proposed [reimbursement] amount."</i>
Health insurance confirmation	PCI application / kiosk comparison	<i>"The kiosk was nice because you could confirm the health insurance there too."</i>
Editing	PCI application / kiosk comparison	<i>"Are you going to make anything editable on here like the kiosks? For example, update your phone, emergency contact, your address."</i> <i>"I'm guessing when you click "No," you would be able to go back in and change that information. What if it's my address that I need to change? For example, maybe I moved further out. So, in this case, I would just do a paper version."</i>



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans asked about additional functionality, cont.

Add [Veteran's] name field	PCI application	<p><i>"I was wondering if my name should be first, but that's just an idea. I still think my name should be there, but everything else makes sense. I would add my name. I want to confirm it's me and not someone else."</i></p> <p><i>"You should maybe put your name somewhere. Maybe next to their appointment. Or last 4 digits. Something that identifies them."</i></p>
Adding information from clinic signage (e.g., if you wait for 15 minutes without being seen)	PCI application	<p><i>"I would like to see something like, "if it's been more than 15 minutes, see the front desk.""</i></p> <p><i>"One thing that could be added is that they have signs posted at the VA, "if you've been waiting for longer than 15 minutes, then inform somebody." You might want to put something like that."</i></p>
Pre-visit summary	PCI application	<p><i>"You could add something like, "please let them know of any other conditions.""</i></p>



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Recommendations

Recommendations

Utilize a user flow that includes asking Veterans if they want to file a travel reimbursement claim before being presented with questions to review and confirm eligibility of a claim, and present them as one question per page.

VA

Sign in

Menu

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Check in at VA

We need some information to verify your identity to check you in.

Your last name

Date of birth (*Required)

Month

Day

Year

Continue

Need help?

Ask a staff member.

VA

Sign in

Menu

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Is this your current contact information?

We can better follow up with you after your appointment when we have your current information.

Mailing address

1221 Douglas Way
Douglas, MA 01516

Home address

15431 Boston Road Apt 1C
Boston, MA 02135

Home phone

408-555-1000

VA

Sign in

Menu

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Back to last screen

Filing for travel reimbursement?

We may be able to submit your claim for review today.

Yes

No

To file later, visit AccessVA travel claim. You can file within 30 days of your appointment. We'll give you the link after you check-in today. You can also ask a staff member for a paper form after checking in.

VA

Sign in

Menu

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Back to last screen

Is this statement true for you?

I traveled to my appointment in my own vehicle. I didn't take any other type of transportation, like a bus or VA transport

If yes, we may be able to submit your claim for travel reimbursement review today.

Yes

No

Need help?

VA

Sign in

Menu

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Back to last screen

Did you travel from this address?

1221 Douglas Way
Douglas, MA 01516

If yes, we may be able to submit your claim for travel reimbursement review today.

Yes

No

Need help?

VA

Sign in

Menu

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Back to last screen

Are you filing receipts from other expenses (e.g., hotel)?

If no, we may be able to submit your claim for travel reimbursement review today.

Yes

No

VA

Sign in

Menu

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Back to last screen

Your appointments

Here are your appointments for today:
September 25, 2020.

9:30 a.m. ET

Facility: Cheyenne VA Medical Center
Clinic: Purple-DiAgustin

Your appointment started more than 10 minutes ago. We can't check you in online. Ask a staff member for help.

10:00 a.m. ET

Facility: Cheyenne VA Medical Center
Clinic: Dermatology MOD4 MDS A

VA

Sign in

Menu

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Back to last screen

You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim

Your appointment:

Time: 12:30 p.m. ET
Clinic: Rheumatology TEAMLET 7/NP

We'll come get you from the waiting room when it's time for your appointment to start.

We'll send you an update about your travel reimbursement.

Recommendations (cont.)

Include clear paths to information (or where to find relevant information) for Veterans to understand travel reimbursement and claim eligibility, without affecting the Veteran's ability to easily complete checking in to their appointment.

Include clearer information on the application's confirmation pages for Veterans to understand where to check the status of their claim (e.g., link to the AccessVA travel claim portal), who to contact if they have questions about their claim and why their travel reimbursement claim couldn't be submitted.

Talk to the Travel Reimbursement Business and BTSSS API partners about finding a way to check a Veteran's travel reimbursement eligibility prior to them submitting a claim and making that function available within the online travel reimbursement ecosystem.

Talk to the BTSSS API partners about expanding the API to support accepting more types of travel reimbursement claims beyond only mileage without other expenses. E.g., traveled from an address other than their home, tolls, meals, public transportation, etc.

Recommendations (cont.)

Knowing that Veterans thought that having the option to file a travel reimbursement claim while checking in for their appointment was easy and convenient, talk to staff-facing application partners about adding travel reimbursement into VistA Scheduling Enhancements (VSE).

Include more information into travel reimbursement claim eligibility questions about common Veteran travel arrangements and trip types (e.g., tolls, meals, Uber, etc.) for Veterans to better understand the questions and feel more confident in their responses.

Avoid using “we may be able to” phrasing in favor of more precise information.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Recommendations (cont.)

For later down the road...

Include support for Veterans to file a travel reimbursement claim after their appointment through something like a post-visit SMS message for those opted in to receive messages from VEText.

Send Veterans a confirmation of their submitted claim through SMS that includes their claim number and where to check the status of their claim (e.g., AccessVA travel claim portal).

Review additional functionality that Veterans asked about with PCI product owners. E.g., estimated claim reimbursement dollar amount, health insurance confirmation, editing demographics, etc.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Thank you