

# 10-10CG Document upload

Mental model and Content-specific comprehension study

# Background

The Caregiver team launched the digitized 10-10CG form October 1, 2020. Early in 2021 the team added functionality that allows a Veteran's legal representative to be identified and documentation (e.g. health care power of attorney) to be optionally uploaded.

There have been 3 iterations of this design.

Currently only ~35% of uploaded documents can be accepted and provide the necessary legal proof for a representative to sign on behalf of the Veteran. This causes pain points for both the staff in the field and for applicants.

- Pain point for Caregiver team in the field that must process the applications, contact each applicant who uploads the wrong document, and possibly work through a new application with them
- Pain point for applicants as it could delay their application and create redundant work AKA filling out a whole new application

# Background

Currently 50% of 10-10CG applicants have the option to upload a document to prove legal representative status.

## Step 4 of 5: Representative document

Some family caregivers are also the Veteran's legal representative. These representatives have the legal authority to make certain decisions for the Veteran.

Here's what you should know:

- You can still continue with this application to apply for the program even if you're not the Veteran's legal representative.
- If you are the Veteran's legal representative, you can upload a document to show your legal status now. If you don't upload your document now, we'll ask you to provide it later.

Do you have a legal representative document you'd like to share with us?

- ☐ Yes. I want to upload my document now.
- ☐ Yes. But I'll provide my document later.
- ☐ No. I don't have this document.

[What types of documents does VA accept to show legal representation? ▾](#)

[What types of documents does VA accept to show legal representation? ^](#)

First, please know that we only accept **full documents**. We can't accept only a cover or signature page. Our staff will review the documents during the application process.

We accept these documents:

- Veteran guardianship, **or**
- Veteran-related court order

We may accept these documents, depending on the requirements where you live:

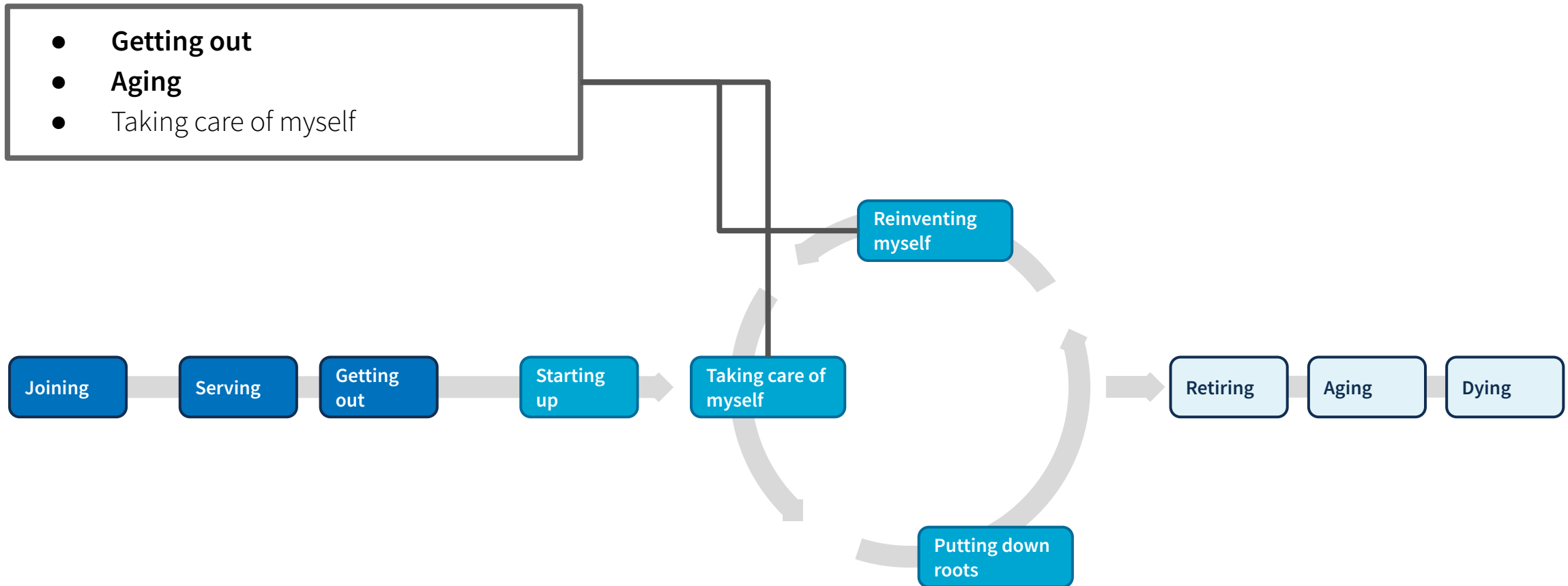
- Power of attorney for the Veteran, **or**
- Health care power of attorney for the Veteran

Being a Veteran's close family member or next of kin doesn't mean you're their representative. We don't accept these documents as a way to show legal representation:

- Marriage or driver's licenses
- Release of Information forms or fiduciary program documents
- Medical or VA benefit records
- Health insurance information

# How this research maps to the Veteran journey

10-10 EZ short form usability



For a fully detailed Veteran journey, go to

<https://github.com/department-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

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
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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
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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
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# Research Goals

**The goals of this user research study are to:**

- Better understand Caregivers' mental model of the types of proof of legal representation they are accustomed to providing
- Better understand how Caregivers think about the nomenclatures of different types of legal representative documents
- Better understand Caregivers' familiarity of health care-specific legal documents
- Validate content comprehension of the list of documents to select from for document upload
- Validate that the new copy and flow leads to more accepted documents uploaded

# Method

Research was conducted remotely through task-based sessions via Zoom using the Perigean contract. We talked to **7 Caregivers**.

We utilized a [Mural board](#) as the visual background of our conversation.

- We first talked through scenarios and the “proof” types that our participants are familiar with providing in each scenario
- Then we looked at the 3 document name “choices” (in the updated iteration)
- Lastly we went through a “mock” flow (in the updated iteration)

*(See Appendix for more information on participant demographics)*

# Updated iteration for research

## Step 4 of 5: Who will sign this application

At the end of this application, we'll ask the Veteran and each family caregiver applicant to sign.

**If the Veteran can't sign for themselves,** a legal representative can sign for them. To sign for a Veteran, you must upload proof that you have the current legal authority to make health care decisions for them. If you choose this option, we'll guide you to help you upload a document we can accept.

Who will sign this application for the Veteran? (\*Required)

- ☐ The Veteran
- ☐ A legal representative with the authority to make health care decisions for the Veteran



# Updated iteration for research

## Step 5 of 6: Proof of legal authority to make decisions

What type of legal document are you uploading for review? (\*Required)

**Note:** We can only accept a document that proves you have the current legal authority to make health care decisions for the Veteran. We don't accept a general or financial power of attorney, marriage certificate, or driver's license as proof. We'll review each document to make sure it meets our requirements.

- ☐ Veteran legal guardianship
- ☐ Veteran-related court order
- ☐ Health care power of attorney with legal authority to make health care decisions for the Veteran
- ☐ I don't have any of these documents

# Updated iteration for research

## Step 5 of 6: Proof of legal authority to make decisions

Check to confirm that the document you're uploading meets each of these requirements. (\*Required)

- ☐ The document gives you the legal authority to make medical decisions on behalf of the Veteran
- ☐ The document is complete. We can't accept only a cover or signature page.

**Note:** Don't upload a driver's license, marriage certificate, or a general or financial power of attorney document. We can't accept these documents as legal authority.

# Updated iteration for research

### Upload your proof of legal authority to make health care decisions for the Veteran

Follow these tips to upload a scanned copy or photo of your document:

- Upload the full document. We can't accept only a cover or signature page.
- Format the files as a .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg, or .png.
- Be sure the file is 10MB or less in size.

**Note:** A 1MB scanned file equals about 500 pages of text. A photo is usually about 6MB. If you have a slow Internet connection, large files may take longer to upload.

Please upload: (\*Required)

- A copy of your Veteran legal guardianship

[Upload this document](#)

### Step 5 of 6: Proof of legal authority to make decisions

### Upload your proof of legal authority to make health care decisions for the Veteran

Follow these tips to upload a scanned copy or photo of your document:

- Upload the full document. We can't accept only a cover or signature page.
- Format the files as a .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg, or .png.
- Be sure the file is 10MB or less in size.

**Note:** A 1MB scanned file equals about 500 pages of text. A photo is usually about 6MB. If you have a slow Internet connection, large files may take longer to upload.

### Make sure your document is one we can accept

We'll review your document to make sure it meets our requirements. If it's not a document we can accept, this may cause a delay in your application or you may have to apply again.

Your upload: **Veteran legal guardianship**

**Document\_name.pdf**

[Delete file and upload another one](#)

# Key General Findings

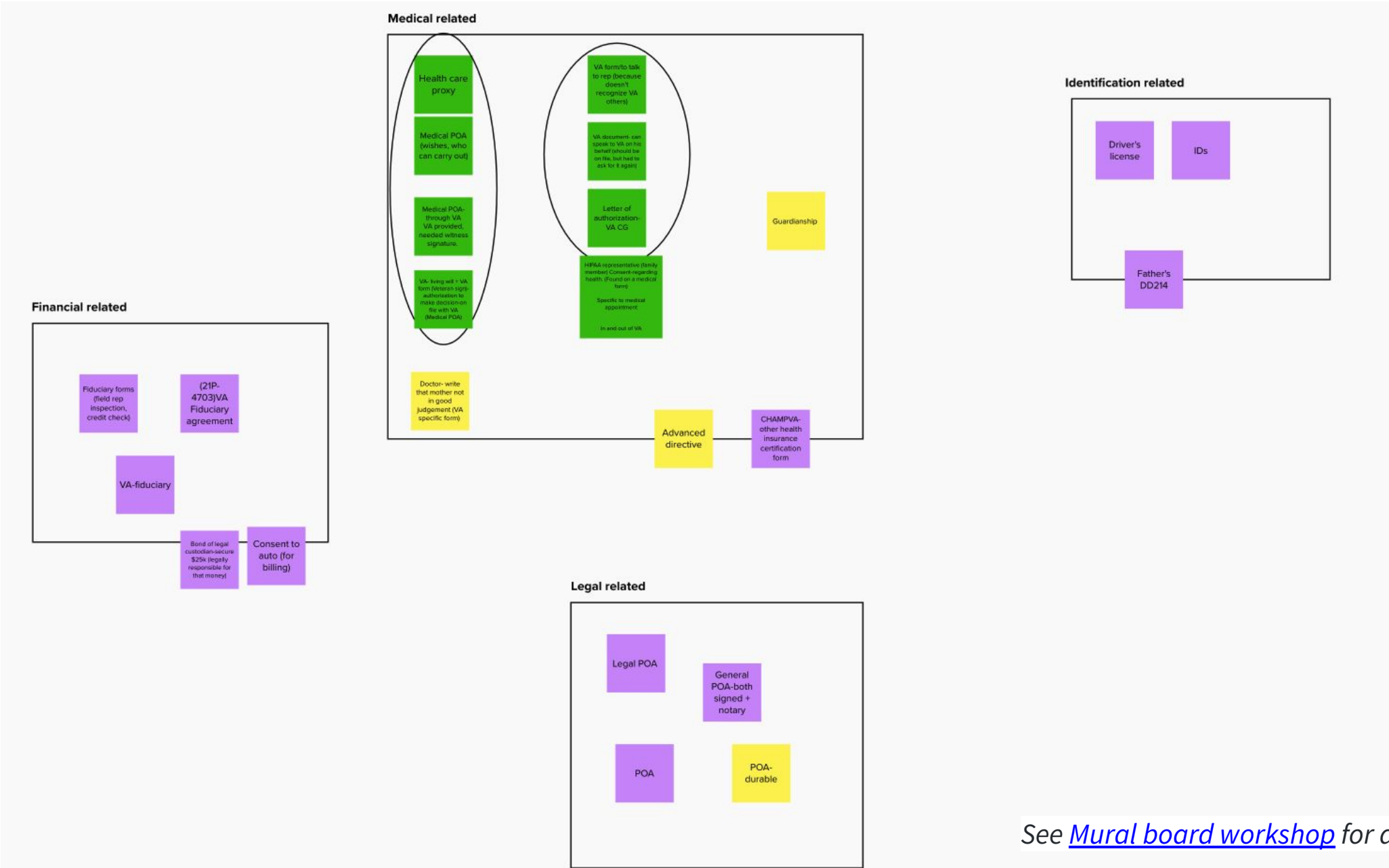
Participants think about legal representative documentation based on what it enables them to do (eg. make medical decisions) rather than the form name itself.

## General Findings

Many participants didn't know the exact name of their legal representative documents, but rather understood the different types of scenarios and what type of paperwork would be useful in a given situation.

- Participants recognize that the name varies from state-to-state and federally.
- **People think in the categories of: legal, financial, and medical.**
- All participants did guess that they needed to provide proof that specifies medical (level of confidence varied widely)

# General Findings



See [Mural board workshop](#) for details

## General Findings

- Participants who named; medical proxy, medical power of attorney (POA), and Caregiver letter to describe legal representative proof that they have provided in circumstances that require them to make medical decision on behalf of the Veteran felt fairly confident in selecting the "Health care power of attorney with legal authority to make health care decisions for the Veteran" choice.

*Note: Caregiver letter AKA Release of information form is not accepted proof in this case.*

Type	Name	Accepted?	Number of participants mentioned this proof
<b>Medical</b>			
	Health care proxy	Yes	1
	Medical POA	Yes	3
	Letter from doctor	?	1
	VA form- likely "Release of information"	No	3
	HIPAA representative (found on a medical form)	?	1
	Guardianship	? (depends if it has a medical stipulation)	1
	Advanced directive	?	1
<b>Financial</b>			
	VA fiduciary	no	3
<b>Legal</b>			
	Legal POA	? (depends if it has a medical stipulation)	1
	General POA	? (depends if it has a medical stipulation)	2
	Durable POA	? (depends if it has a medical stipulation)	1
<b>Identification</b>			
	ID/ Driver's license	no	2
	DD214	no	1



## General Findings

- For some participants, the title "Proof of legal authority to make decisions" was confusing because they were unsure if this is referring to legal or medical.
- Participants were less familiar with the terms "Veteran legal guardianship" and "Veteran-related court order" than Health care POA.
  - One participant thought "POA" usually refers to financial duties, but didn't think it would stop her from moving through the form.

### Step 5 of 6: Proof of legal authority to make decisions



What type of legal document are you uploading for review? (\*Required)

**Note:** We can only accept a document that proves you have the current legal authority to make health care decisions for the Veteran. We don't accept a general or financial power of attorney, marriage certificate, or driver's license as proof. We'll review each document to make sure it meets our requirements.

- ☐ Veteran legal guardianship
- ☐ Veteran-related court order
- ☐ Health care power of attorney with legal authority to make health care decisions for the Veteran
- ☐ I don't have any of these documents

Some participants have paperwork on file with the VA that allows them to speak on behalf of the Veteran, their expectation is that they only need to provide proof of who they are (Eg. ID/ Driver's license), they referred to this as a "Caregiver letter."

## General Findings

Three of the participants said that they have a VA form referred to as "Caregiver letter" on file so that they expect to only have to provide ID or identifying information in order to speak on the Veteran's behalf.

*Note: We think that Caregiver letter is referring to a Release of information form which is not accepted proof in this case.*

*"The VA has this, I just need to provide my name and last 4 of Social [security number]. Sometimes when I go into a doctor's appointment with my husband I have to remind them of this. They have such a high turnover rate, I usually have to educate them myself."*

Participants believe that the legal representative documentation comes from the VA and thus a form number or link to the form or how to get it and/or example should be provided.

## General Findings

The majority of participants who have had to provide legal representative documentation obtained the forms through the VA. Some participants also went through a lawyer, but believe that VA paperwork is needed for the VA.

- Participants believe that there should be a form number or link to the form provided.
- Participants think that there should be directions on how to obtain the form for those that do not currently have it.

*"It should have the form number or a link to where to download the form."*

*"It would be great if there was a glossary to explain what each one is, because they are called different things in different states, and the VA is federal, so just explain what they [document type choices] give the power to do."*

*"What if the person doesn't have these documents, but needs them? You should tell them how to get them. Also explain that sometimes you can add onto an existing one like a general POA- since you say you can't accept that."*

Often the ability for the Veteran to sign for themselves and make medical decisions/or not depends on the day.

## General Findings

A few participants were unsure of who would sign the application in their circumstance. They said that they usually try to involve the Veteran, but if the Veteran was having a day that they are unable to, then the caregiver would sign on their behalf.

- These participants wanted assurance that if they signed this application, that it wouldn't take away the Veteran's privileges to sign and make decisions in the future.
- Participants would like more explanation of what each response means.

*“Part of my job as a Caregiver is to plan ahead ways to include my husband (the Veteran). If he is having a good day, I would have him sign, if he is having a bad day, I will.”*

*“Will this take away my husband's ability to make decisions in the future?”  
when asked what they would do if faced with this question "I would be on the phone to the Caregiver program.”*

Participants wish that the text could be shorter and more precise.



## General Findings

About half of the participants expressed that there was too much information given on each page, and would prefer if the language was more direct.

*“If I could rewrite it, I'd say:*

- 1. Can the Veteran sign for themselves?*
- 2. If no, who is the legal representative?*
- 3. What is your relationship to the Veteran?*
- 4. Do you have legal proof?*
- 5. What type of legal proof do you have?”*

Participants feel like the copy that states that there could be a delay/rejection due to wrong document upload is very negative.

## General Findings

Participants don't feel like this copy would stop them from completing the application, but do feel like it leaves a negative impression. One participant thought that this language is the VA's way of keeping people out of the program.

*"This is the VA's out." when asked to explain more "This is the VA's way to not accept people or discourage people who won't submit an application again."*

*"Oof that is pretty negative."*

# Additional Findings

## Additional Findings

Participants believe that VA should be more proactive in patient planning in regards to programs and paperwork that should be considered in their future based on their current needs.

*"Why doesn't the VA look at the patient's medical record and proactively recommend paperwork and programs that might benefit us now or in the future?" when asked how they would like to receive this "The VA sends out an ungodly amount of notifications... include it in these."*

# Recommendations

# Recommendations

## **Update content**

1. Rewrite the question and titles to make it more clear that we are requesting legal representation for medical decisions specifically
2. Rewrite questions to be more direct

# Recommendations

## **Provide more context**

1. Explore the possibility of including a link, form number, and/or explanation of the use for each document type
2. Provide a path for those who don't have the paperwork, but need to obtain it



# Recommendations

## Design

1. Update flow/UX of current to an adjusted tested version in iterations
2. Explore the possibility of making this section of the form visually distinct from the rest of the form so that it feels more cohesive with the signature page rather than the application pages
  - Explore the possibility of breaking up the review section and signature section and having the document upload option between them

## Recommendations: *In the future*

1. Look into ways of integrating these questions into the signature page
2. Implement a “wizard” like flow
3. For those who do submit a document that cannot be accepted, provide a recourse to just "edit" the application rather than having to complete a whole new one
4. Look into the possibility of tying a legal representative document that is already on file with VA to the application

# Appendix

# Participants (7 total)

## 7 Caregivers

- Part of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers:
  - Yes: 2
  - No; denied: 3
  - No; unaware of the program: 1
  - No; not currently needed: 1
- Gender:
  - Female: 7
- Age:
  - 35-44: 2
  - 45-54: 1
  - 55-64: 1
  - Unknown: 3

# Participants (7 total)

## 7 Caregivers

- Education:
  - Some college (no degree): 1
  - Bachelor's degree: 1
  - Master's degree: 2
  - Unknown: 3
- Geographic locations:
  - Rural: 2
  - Urban: 5
- Race, ethnicity:
  - Black or African American: 2
  - White or Caucasian: 2
  - Mixed (Asian, White or Caucasian): 1
  - Unknown: 2