

# 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.



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# 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](#)

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### 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)  

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### 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 [👤](#)

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### 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](#)

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### 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?

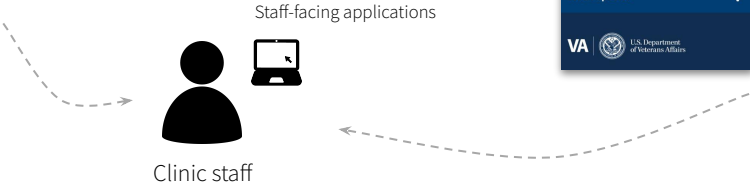
Ask a staff member.

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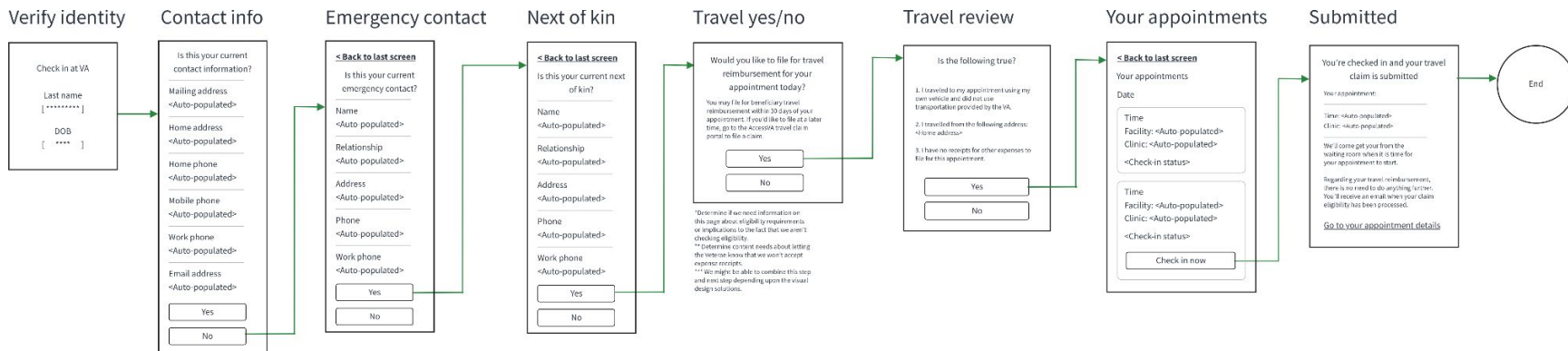
Veteran waits to be seen in the waiting room



# 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 that work, the Modernized Check-In Experience Team [met with 6 travel assistants and supervisors from VA Bay Pines Healthcare System and VA Texas Valley Health Care to gain further insights into travel reimbursement](#), and subsequently developed a user flow for the PCI application.



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# 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?

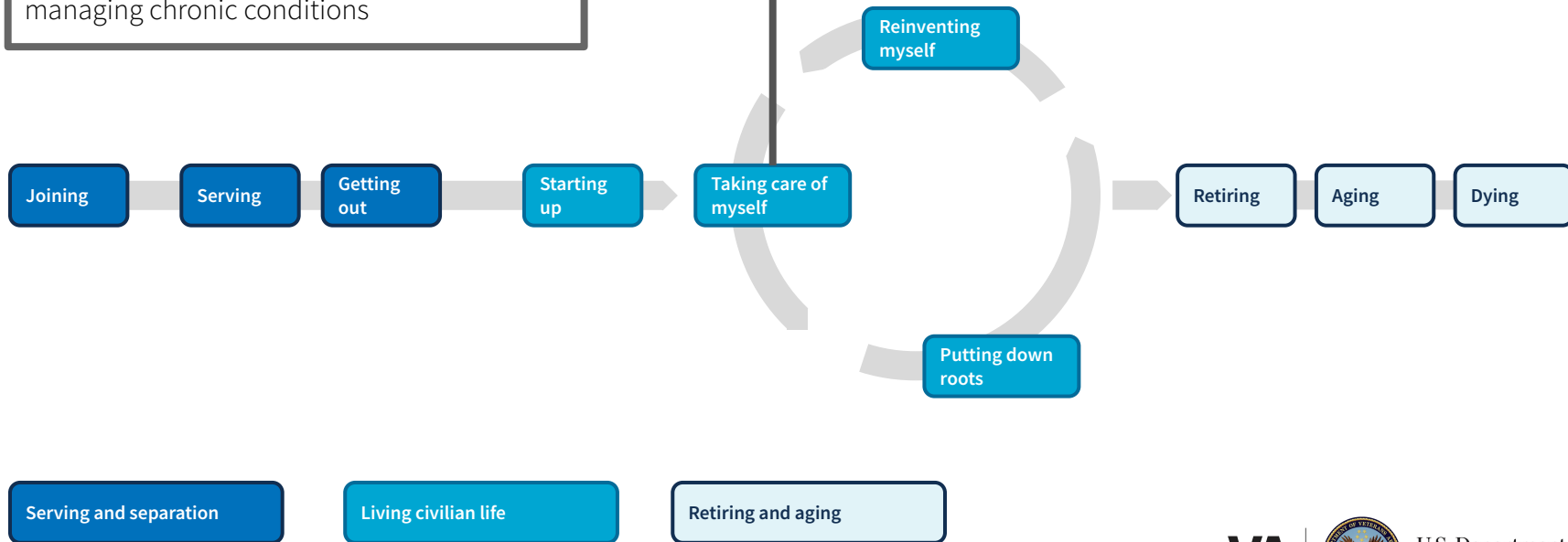


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# How this research maps to the overall Veteran journey

## 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



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# 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

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# Methodology

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# 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

Check in at VA  
We need some information to verify your identity to check you in.  
Your last name  
Date of birth (Required)  
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  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

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

Are all of the following true?  
Select Yes if all three statements are true.  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

Your appointments  
Here are your appointments for today: September 25, 2020  
9:30 a.m. ET  
Pacific Clinician at Medical Center Clinic, Portland, OR 97239  
Your appointment started more than 30 minutes ago. We will check your status and a staff member will help.  
10:00 a.m. ET  
Pacific Clinician at Medical Center Clinic, Portland, OR 97239  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim  
Your appointment:  
Time: 12:30 p.m. ET  
Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2020  
We'll have you get your claim from the waiting area when it's time for your appointment to start.  
We'll send you an update about your claim when we can.

### Prototype B

Check in at VA  
We need some information to verify your identity to check you in.  
Your last name  
Date of birth (Required)  
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  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

Are all of the following true?  
Select Yes if all three statements are true.  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

Your appointments  
Here are your appointments for today: September 25, 2020  
9:30 a.m. ET  
Pacific Clinician at Medical Center Clinic, Portland, OR 97239  
Your appointment started more than 30 minutes ago. We will check your status and a staff member will help.  
10:00 a.m. ET  
Pacific Clinician at Medical Center Clinic, Portland, OR 97239  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim  
Your appointment:  
Time: 12:30 p.m. ET  
Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2020  
We'll have you get your claim from the waiting area when it's time for your appointment to start.  
We'll send you an update about your claim when we can.

## 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

Check in at VA  
We need some information to verify your identity to check you in.  
Your last name  
Date of birth (Required)  
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  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

Is this statement true for you?  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
Yes  
No

Did you travel from this address?  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
Yes  
No

Your appointments  
Here are your appointments for today: September 25, 2020  
9:30 a.m. ET  
Pacific Clinician at Medical Center Clinic, Portland, OR 97239  
Your appointment started more than 30 minutes ago. We will check your status and a staff member will help.  
10:00 a.m. ET  
Pacific Clinician at Medical Center Clinic, Portland, OR 97239  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim  
Your appointment:  
Time: 12:30 p.m. ET  
Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2020  
We'll have you get your claim from the waiting area when it's time for your appointment to start.  
We'll send you an update about your claim when we can.

### Prototype B

Check in at VA  
We need some information to verify your identity to check you in.  
Your last name  
Date of birth (Required)  
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  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

Are all of the following true?  
Select Yes if all three statements are true.  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
I checked in to my appointment on your website, either before or after your appointment. (How have you traveled?)  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

Your appointments  
Here are your appointments for today: September 25, 2020  
9:30 a.m. ET  
Pacific Clinician at Medical Center Clinic, Portland, OR 97239  
Your appointment started more than 30 minutes ago. We will check your status and a staff member will help.  
10:00 a.m. ET  
Pacific Clinician at Medical Center Clinic, Portland, OR 97239  
Continue  
Need help? Ask a staff member

You're checked in and we're reviewing your travel claim  
Your appointment:  
Time: 12:30 p.m. ET  
Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2020  
We'll have you get your claim from the waiting area when it's time for your appointment to start.  
We'll send you an update about your claim when we can.



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# 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
<b>2022-08 Travel Reimbursement MVP Remote Usability Test</b>																							
final # of participants	20																						
Category	%	Target	Study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>Veterans</b>																							
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	0	1	0	0
Mobile user	50.00%	10	16	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rural	25.00%	5	8	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	N	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	N	0
No degree	25.00%	5	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other than honorable	21.00%	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Immigrant origin	17.00%	4	9	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	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Expat (living abroad)	0.40%	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Race</b>																							
Based on VA's projected statistics																							
Black	15.00%	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	N	1	0	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	1	0	0
Biracial	3.00%	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	3.00%	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Native	0.30%	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>LGBTQ+</b>																							
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	1	0	0
Transgender	--%	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nonbinary, gender fluid, ge	--%	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Assistive Tech (AT)</b>																							
Ask an ally specialist to help you complete this. Targets are for a general AT study.																							
Beginner AT User	11u11	9VALUE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Experienced AT User	11u11	9VALUE	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	11u11	9VALUE	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)	11u11	9VALUE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Magnification/Zoom	11u11	9VALUE	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	11u11	9VALUE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hearing Aids	11u11	9VALUE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sighted Keyboard	11u11	9VALUE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Captions	11u11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Switch Device	11u11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Braille Reader	11u11	1	9	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><b>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.</b></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><b>No. Veterans thought having the option to file a travel reimbursement claim while checking in for their appointment was easy and convenient.</b></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>

## 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.*



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## 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.*



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# Details of Key Findings

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# 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

VA | An official website of the United States government | Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now | Sign in | Menu

### Check in at VA

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

Your last name

Date of birth <sup>(Required)</sup>

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**  
1221 Douglas Way  
Douglas, MA 01516

**Home address**  
15431 Boston Road Apt 1C  
Boston, MA 02135

**Home phone**  
\*\*\*-\*\*-\*\*\*\*

### Filing for travel reimbursement?

[Back to last screen](#)

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.

## Prototype B

VA | An official website of the United States government | Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now | Sign in | Menu

### Check in at VA

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

Your last name

Date of birth <sup>(Required)</sup>

Month  Day  Year

[Continue](#)

### Need help?

Ask a staff member.

### Are all of the following true?

[Back to last screen](#)

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 expenses for this appointment (e.g. hotel expenses)

**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.

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## 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.”***

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### 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

**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**  
1221 Douglas Way  
Douglas, MA 01516  
**Home address**  
15431 Boston Road Apt 1C  
Boston, MA 02135  
**Home phone**  
xxx xxx xxxx

**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.  
**Back to last screen**  
**Yes** **No**  
**Need help?**

**Did you travel from this address?**  
1221 Douglas Way  
Douglas, MA 01516  
**Back to last screen**  
**Yes** **No**  
**Need help?**

**Are you filing receipts from other expenses (e.g., hotel)?**  
**Back to last screen**  
**Yes** **No**  
**Need help?**

**Your appointments**  
Here are your appointments for today:  
September 25, 2020.  
**9:30 a.m. ET**  
Facility: Cheyenne VA Medical Center  
Clinic: Purple-DrAgustin  
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

**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

**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**  
1221 Douglas Way  
Douglas, MA 01516  
**Home address**  
15431 Boston Road Apt 1C  
Boston, MA 02135  
**Home phone**  
xxx xxx xxxx

**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

**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-DrAgustin  
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

**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.**



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## 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

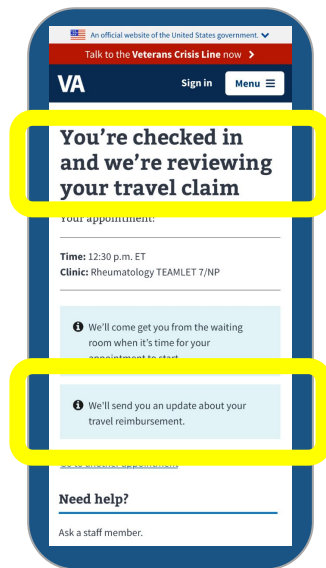
***“Since I asked them to do [a] travel [reimbursement claim], I would just have the question on how I would be updated. I guess by email.”***

***“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**



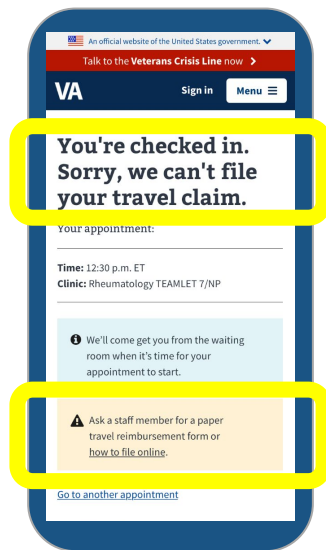
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## 5. How well or not so well do Veterans understand the status of their submitted claim or how to file a claim later on the PCI application's confirmation pages? (cont.)

*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**




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# 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**



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# 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.”*



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# 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.”*



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# 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**



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# Veterans asked about additional functionality

<b>File a claim for a past appointment</b>	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>
<b>Estimated reimbursement dollar amount</b>	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>
<b>Health insurance confirmation</b>	PCI application / kiosk comparison	<i>"The kiosk was nice because you could confirm the health insurance there too."</i>
<b>Editing</b>	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>



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# Veterans asked about additional functionality, cont.

<b>Add [Veteran's] name field</b>	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>
<b>Adding information from clinic signage (e.g., if you wait for 15 minutes without being seen)</b>	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>
<b>Pre-visit summary</b>	PCI application	<p><i>"You could add something like, "please let them know of any other conditions.""</i></p>



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# Recommendations

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# 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

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Sign in

Menu

## 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

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Sign in

Menu

## 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**  
408-100-1000

VA

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Sign in

Menu

[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

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Sign in

Menu

[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

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Sign in

Menu

[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

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Sign in

Menu

[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

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Sign in

Menu

[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-DiAugustin

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

Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now

Sign in

Menu

[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

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.



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## 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.



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# 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.



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Thank you