

Research Findings for 2022 VA Mobile Rx Refill/Pharmacy Usability Test

Jul 8, 2022

Background

Since the launch of the Flagship Mobile App, the Mobile App team has received numerous requests from Veterans to have a prescription refill feature in the flagship app. In an effort to meet that need, we are incorporating an MVP prescription refill experience into the app. We conducted user research on a design prototype of the MVP in order to ensure we are meeting users' expectations and core needs.

Office

Office of the CTO - Digital Experience (OCTO-DE)

Team

VA Mobile App Team:

- Esther Kitavi, VA Mobile App UX
- Brenda Rocha, VA Mobile App Product
- Alex Taylor, VA Mobile App UX

Date of Study

06/2022

OCTO Objectives

This work supports the following objectives:

OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE DESCRIPTIONS
Objective 2	Veterans can manage their health services online
Objective 5	Veterans and their families can find a single, authoritative source of information
Objective 6	Logged-in users have a personalized experience, with relevant and

	time-saving features
Objective 7	Veterans and their families trust the security accuracy and relevancy of VA.gov

Measures to increase:

- Usage of digital, self- service tools
- Completion rate of online transactions
- Veteran satisfaction with VA.gov

Measures to decrease:

- Call center volume, wait time, and time to resolution
- Time from online benefit discovery to benefit delivery
- Time to successful complete and submit online transactions

Veteran Journey

[Veteran Journey Map](#)

PHASE	LIFE STAGE	MOMENT
Phase 1: Serving and Separating from the Military	Starting Up	Attending to health needs
Phase 2: Living Civilian Life	Taking care of myself	1. Recognizing and addressing mental health needs 2. Managing primary care and chronic health issues 3. Seeking support for an acute health event 4. Maintaining my health
Phase 3: Retiring and Aging	1. Retiring 2. Aging	1. Taking care of my health 2. Managing my declining health

Research Goals

1. Determine if the current concept of refilling a prescription matches Veteran's expectations and understanding
2. Identify major usability or content issues with the current concept of viewing prescription history and tracking prescriptions

Outcome

The results of this research will help us:

- Determine if there are any big usability concerns that Veterans experience with the designs
- Inform later iterations of the designs as we consider MVP and post-MVP features

Research Questions

This research will help us answer:

- Do Veterans understand the difference between refillable and non-refillable prescriptions in the refill modal?
- Will Veterans be able to accomplish the main pharmacy tasks:
 - Refilling a prescription?
 - Viewing their prescription history and prescription details?
 - Viewing tracking details of a prescription?
- What high-level prescription information do Veterans need to know?

Participant Demographics

[Rx Refill Participant Demographics Tracker](#) [ADD LINK]

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

- Live in rural areas or abroad
- Identify as Black, Latinx, Native
- Identify as LGBTQ+
- Of immigrant origin

We recommend studies with these underserved groups in the future.

Note: Due to uncertainty on the accessibility of the prototype tool, we could only recruit assistive tech users that use magnification/zoom or hearing aids

Methodology

Approach

We interviewed 10 Veterans in a remote moderated usability study using a low fidelity Figma prototype

Study Procedure

3. Introduction

- Went through an overview of session format
- Asked participants about their usage and experience with VA services (VA.gov, MHV, VA: Health and Benefits app)
- Asked participants about their experience with prescription management and prescription mental model

4. Prototype Testing

- Guided participants through the “VA Mobile App Pharmacy” experience to get their feedback on key interactions

5. General Takeaways

- Deep-dived into user-specific insights
- Obtained general feedback of the prototype experience

Hypothesis & Conclusions

- Veterans will be able to accomplish the pharmacy tasks designed in the prototype, and will articulate what the refillable and non-refillable categories mean.
 - Definitely True: Most participants were able to accomplish the pharmacy tasks without much assistance. Participants had consistent thoughts on what the refillable and non-refillable categories mean to them.
- Veterans will have different high-level prescription information that they need to know depending on the context of the prescription
 - Likely True: While participants were able to articulate what prescription information they find valuable when it comes to refilling prescriptions, a consistent response was not given for other contexts.

Findings

Key Findings

Validated Interactions

1. Participants enjoyed the clean, minimal style of the Pharmacy Landing Page
2. Participants liked how easy it was to find and refill their refillable prescriptions
3. Participants liked being able to filter and look for more detailed information as needed

Insightful Findings

1. Participants wanted more of a confirmation when submitting their refill requests

2. Participants wanted a place to view all of the “in process prescriptions”
3. Participants have a lot of faith in VA prescription shipping

Secondary Findings

1. Participants didn’t understand what the “non-refillable” tab was, and why it contained a separate list of prescriptions
2. Participants stated they didn’t need all of the metadata upfront in order to refill
3. Participants thought that their tracked prescriptions were a list of active or recently submitted prescriptions
4. Participants liked the idea of renewing through secure messaging, as well as other functions.

Prototype Feedback (Detailed Findings)

Landing Page

- Refill is the highest priority function for all participants; they liked that this was easily accessible and at the top
 - *“I like the big refill button, because it's what I'm coming straight here to do. I like that it's at the top.” (P2)*
- Participants noticed the pharmacy tool buttons after the refill button and tracking section
- Participants who often have to request prescription renewals were excited about the “Send renewal requests” button
 - *“I would think it would take me to message my primary. If it does that it would be cool. It would either allow me to send a message or it would automatically send a message to my provider. ‘Hey, this Veteran, last 4 [SSN], needs these prescriptions renewed.’ I wouldn’t mind if it prefilled a message for me as well...Even though I've been taking some of them for years, I don't always type them correctly” (P13)*
- Participants liked the tracking section layout but had different ideas about what this list meant
 - 5/10 participants thought this list would include other types of prescriptions, e.g. recently submitted refill requests or refillable prescriptions
 - *“I think this is all the current prescriptions. I don’t think it shows any of the expired prescriptions. These are only going back to January of 2022 after I clicked on show all. I am assuming that it only showed the 3 most current before I clicked on show all.” (P12)*
 - Only 1 participant knew to use the “Show all” button to get to the Tracking List
 - 5/10 participants said they don’t typically look at tracking information

Refill Modal

- 9/10 participants were able to easily select prescriptions and complete the refill request without prompting or guidance
- Participants felt there was more information here than needed in order to refill
 - No participants thought the instructions field was useful. Only 1 participant found the facility name useful
 - *“Refills left is fine. I just need to know how many refills are left and if I can hit it” (P13)*
- All participants were confused by the “Non-refillable” list and thought it didn’t make sense on this screen. Only 2 participants ultimately understood the purpose.
- 4/10 participants verbally expressed that the snackbar was not sufficient confirmation
 - *“So, I would assume I completed the process, and I would get some kind of notification that I submitted the request...that the order has been filled, you should expect the refill in 5-7 days. Because with this [snackbar] I don’t get any of that information.” (P14)*
- 6/10 participants thought that submitted refill requests went to its own area such as the landing page, tracking list, or a section/ default filter on the Prescription History screen
 - *“I would expect to see it [requested refill] under prescription tracking it just would not have a tracking number. It would have the name, dose, the prescription number, and request sent. It would have at the bottom request sent and today’s date, the next day request received with tomorrow’s date, and then a couple days later request sent and tracking number.” (P4)*
- 7 participants wanted to see all of their “in progress” prescriptions in a separate area or list. 4 of those participants expected to see their recently submitted requests in the tracking list
 - *“You know what would make [this] fairly easy for me?[...]Anything that I had requested would be on that one scroll but separated into groups[...]Say something is taking a little longer, I am running low, if I could have one page that shows that list I can see if it has a tracking number or I can see where it is in the process.” (P9)*
- Participants shared that they typically go to the Refill list (on MHV and the RX refill app) knowing what they may want to refill. Therefore, they would not be making decisions about what to refill on this screen.

Prescription History

- Participants understood what the prescription history screen would show but had different ideas on what information should be presented
 - 1 participant wanted to see date last filled, 2 participants mentioned wanting to see the instructions, 1 participant mentioned not finding the RX number useful

- 9/10 participants were able to easily filter the prescription history screen without prompting or guidance
 - *"Very simple to do [filter]...It's intuitive... I'm an intuitive guy!" (P14)*
- 3/10 participants wanted to see a version history (if and when a dosage changed)
 - *"I would want to see the history of that one certain medication. Every time I was prescribed the medication. I want the entire history. If I could see the details for every bottle I have...To see if dosage was changed. The dates my medication was changed on to keep my providers updated with that information." (P1)*
- Participants reacted positively to the prescription details screen and the information presented
 - 1 participant had thoughts on the grouping of information and suggested grouping the rx number and prescription name together "for people who do use the RX number [to differentiate prescriptions]" (P9)
- 3/10 participants noticed the TTY number. 2 of the participants were confused by what it meant.

Tracking

- Half of all participants said they don't typically look at tracking information
 - These participants stated they'll only look at tracking if their package is taking a while to arrive or to verify it's been shipped.
 - *"You can track it [prescription packages], but I do not do that very often because I know I will receive it within 7 days." (P5)*
- 3/10 participants expected to filter the prescription history page to view tracked prescriptions. Most users did not know how to get to the tracking list screen by selecting the "show all" button in the landing page
- Participants expected that clicking the tracking number would take them to the carrier's website to view more detailed tracking information
- Participants would want to be notified that their prescriptions have been shipped and/or delivered
 - *"Yes, that (shipped notification) would be nice. This way you know to look for it" (P15)*
- Participants found the basic tracking information in the tracking details screen to be sufficient
 - When questioned, participants said they wouldn't need to see detailed information about their prescription in the tracking details screen

Additional Findings

- Shipping estimates influence users' refill behavior

- Participants who have been refilling for a while reported observing how many days medications take to ship. They'll wait until this amount of days to request a refill.
- Some participants expressed confusion around statuses
 - 4 users verbally expressed confusion about what the statuses meant
 - "What is active:parked? Parked? I have no idea what that means." (P2)
- MHV users didn't seem to recognize all the statuses
 - 1 participant who has been using MHV for a while reported having to frequently look up status definitions
- Several participants who use MHV reported login as a pain point for them
 - There was common frustration expressed at the "3 billion ways to log in" (P2)

Recommendations & Next Steps

Recommendations

- Create a "refills-in-progress" list or area for users to view their prescriptions that are: submitted, in process, on hold, or trackable
- Add a confirmation summary screen once the user has submitted their refill requests. This should summarize the list of requests that were successfully submitted
- Replace the tracking section on the landing page with a section or button that links to "in-progress" prescriptions
- Change the concept of a non-refillable tab. Put these prescriptions in the list of prescriptions that are deemed "in-progress"
- Consider removing unnecessary metadata from the Refill list modal
- Incorporate the tracking list/ index into another list or screen
- Group the RX number with the prescription name
- Remove additional prescription information from the tracking details view

Post-MVP/Future State

- Design and build the "Renewal requests experience"; keep a button leading to this function in the homepage
- Implement status update notifications to notify users when the status of their prescription has changed
- Implement tracking notifications to notify users when their package has been shipped and delivered
- Consider incorporating a "history view" for prescriptions of the same medication, so that users are able to see how that prescription has changed over time (e.g. dosage changes).

Next Steps

Step 1: User Testing Output

Distill user testing output into key takeaways and design considerations

Step 2: Design Backlog

Synthesize design considerations into backlog items/ design tasks

Step 3: Iterate on design concepts

Create design concepts based on priority items

Step 4: Development Backlog

Put completed designs in the development backlog and work with leadership and PO(s) to prioritize.

Appendix

- [Research Plan](#)
- [Conversation Guide](#)
- [Figma Prototype](#)
- [Research Synthesis](#)
- [Participant Demographics Tracker](#)