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

Sep 14, 2022

Background

In June of 2022, the Flagship Mobile App completed a round of usability testing on the first version of the pharmacy feature for the app. This was done in an effort to expand the number of transactions that can be accomplished in the app and meet Veteran needs. Output from the research resulted in significant changes to how pharmacy information is displayed. We conducted a second round of usability testing to ensure that the new changes were intuitive and still meet Veteran needs.

Office

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

Team

VA Mobile App Team:
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Date of Study

08/2022

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 users are able to navigate the IA, request prescription refills, and find prescriptions that they are looking for
2. Identify major usability or content issues with the current designs

Outcome

The results of this research will help us:

- Determine if there are any big usability concerns that Veterans experience with the designs
- Inform if the currently implemented designs can be released to production or if additional refinements are needed

Research Questions

This research will help us answer:

- Are users able to easily find and access the refill modal?
- Do users understand where requested refills go and where to find requested refills?
- Are users able to successfully find prescriptions they're looking for?
- Do users understand the tab structure and what items could be in the tabs?

Methodology

Approach

We interviewed 13[1] Veterans in a remote moderated usability study using a high fidelity Figma prototype

[1] *1 participant did not go through the prototype*

Study Procedure

1. Introduction
   - Went through an overview of the session format
   - Explored participant's usage and experience with VA services (VA.gov, MHV, VA: Health and Benefits app)

2. Prototype Testing
   - Tasked the participant with going through the updated "VA Mobile App Prescription" to test prototype usability and get participant feedback

3. Landing Screen Discovery
   - Asked participants about their preference for a landing screen
   - Asked participants about their day-to-day Rx management to determine post-MVP features

4. General Takeaways
   - Deep-dived into user-specific insights
   - Obtained general feedback for the prototype experience

Hypothesis & Conclusions

- Veterans will be able to easily access the refill modal.
  - Definitely True: Most participants were able to access the refill modal and go through the refill task without much assistance.
- Veterans will be able to navigate the IA, understand the tab structure, and what items could be in the tabs.
  - Definitely True: Most participants were able to access the tabs and understand what times would be on those tabs.

Quantitative & Synthesis

Quantitative synthesis was done on a few Rx tasks and on the prescription card information

1. Refill request:
   - 11 participants initially noticed the refill button; 3 had to be prompted to select the button
   - 9^1 participants understood what would happen when selecting the button
   - 6^2 participants found the refill process favorable[4]
2. Tab navigation:
   - 8 participants initially noticed the tabs; 2 had to be prompted to navigate to a particular tab
   - 12 participants understood the purpose of the tabs; 10^3 found the tabs useful
3. Landing page:
   - 3^4 participants wanted a landing page
   - 4 participants had difficulty navigating the screens
   - 1^1 participant found the list overwhelming

[1]1 unclear result not included; [2]4 unclear results not included; [3]2 unclear results not included; [4]5 unclear results not included

Findings

Key Findings

1. Participants understood how to initiate refill requests from the list view
2. Participants found the tabs useful for checking on the status of their refill requests
3. Participants found the list view easy to navigate and not overwhelming

Secondary Findings

1. Participants liked the amount of prescription information presented in the cards but had different ideas about what they considered important
2. Participants mentioned the prescription statuses as one of the first things they noticed.

Detailed Findings

- Participants considered high-level prescription information important, but had different ideas about what was most important
  - 5 participants mentioned the instructions field; 4 of the 5 participants desired easy access to this information (in case they lost their prescription bottle or the bottle label rubbed off)
  - 6 participants mentioned the count of refills left as important to them; this is used to determine whether a medication needs to be renewed
  - 3 participants mentioned the fill date and VA facility with differing use cases given.
- 6/12[1] participants had different refill mental models
  - 4 of the 6 expected the refill process to work like MHV (with checkboxes next to the prescription card). 2 of the 6 expected to refill from the prescription details screen.
    - "I was originally thinking to click on Advil on the home screen." (P15)
    - "If I click on 'Advil' I would expect to see a refill button on the details page. If I had multiple to refill, I would click 'Start refill request', but if just one, I would click on the individual medication." (P18)
  - However, only 3 out of the 6 participants had to be prompted to select the "Start refill request" button.
- Participants understood the refill summary screen and found it informative
  - However, 2 participants were confused by the wording of the "review processing refills" button.
    - "I would change the wording on the 'Review processing refills' button. I would have it say 'View processing refills' and get rid of the word review. The next screen says it's being processed instead of reviewed." (P13)
- All participants were successful in viewing prescription tracking details and reacted positively to the information presented
  - "The tracking is clearer than what I get now. I like that it shows what medications are also in the package" (P11)
- 7/12[1] participants would want to receive refill and shipping alerts (push, text, email)
  - Participants mentioned wanting to be notified when a prescription is eligible to be refilled and if there is an issue refilling a prescription.
    - "I would like a warning to refill a prescription. I would like to get it through my phone. It would be something I would benefit from. I would prefer

email. If I get a text from a number I don't know, I tend to ignore it. It could say 'You need to order medication now.'" (P9)

- ○ Participants mentioned wanting to be noticed when a prescription is shipped and delivered.
  - ■ "I would like to be notified that my medication shipped and delivered. I would prefer text personally but maybe a way you can opt into which type of notification." (P14)

[1] *1 participant did not go through the prototype*

Findings With "Operational Constraints"

- 5/13 participants experienced issues with their medication delivery
  - ○ These issues were specific to being unable to confirm or edit their address on file
- 4/13 participants desired a one-stop-shop for all their VA needs
  - ○ [With the] Rx app I can get my refills…with MHV I can direct message the pharmacy staff…or get a hold of my primary physician to request more refills…Now with the VA app I don't have the ability to see any prescription stuff at all and that's frustrating. I would say that the thing would be somehow to converge or merge some of the various apps if possible" (P5)
- 1 participant expressed frustration at the coordination it takes to get care at different VA facilities
  - ○ Feels like she should be able to go to any VA facility (regardless of her status) and get care

Veteran Snapshot

A blind participant shared that they haven't had a very accessible experience with the VA

- Have to ask and know about services in order for the VA to provide
  - ○ Found it upsetting that the VA would send her letters that she couldn't read
  - ○ Has to have help managing her prescriptions since she can't read the information on packaging or bottles (due to lack of braille)
  - ○ Has difficulty taking the caps off of her prescription bottles so will need to request a change of caps from her provider

- Accessibility technology can be difficult for beginners to understand
  - ○ Mentioned that the VA likes to use Apple products that require a lot of knowledge of how to swipe in order to use

- "Having a prescriptions experience on my phone would make it a lot easier!" (P2)

Recommendations & Next Steps

Recommendations

- Rethink the visual hierarchy of the prescription status tag
- Consider rephrasing the "Review processing refills" button and potentially other areas on the screen that use the term "Review"
- Retain the current card metadata

Post-MVP/Future State
- Consider revisiting the card metadata fields by investigating how users use the information post-launch
- Consider adding a disclaimer on the profile page that changing the address there won't affect the Rx address
- Implement refill alerts to notify users when a prescription is eligible to be refilled
- Implement refill status alerts to notify users when there is a problem refilling a prescription
- Implement shipping alerts to notify users when a prescription has been shipped and delivered

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

Step 5: Release
Go through the pre-launch process and launch the new feature

Participant Demographics

[Rx Refill Participant Demographics Tracker](#)

Findings may not include the perspectives of the following underserved Veteran groups:
- Live abroad
- Of immigrant origin
- Identify as Asian or Latinx
- Identify as LGBTQ+

We recommend studies with these underserved groups in the future.

Note: We did not specifically recruit participants that live abroad, are of immigrant origin or identify as LGBTQ+

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

Appendix

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