**VA.gov CMS research**

# Facilities: VAMC Pittsburgh veteran patient research

*VAMC Pittsburgh is the model location of approximately 150 medical centers.*

*This plan covers research we aim to do onsite at VAMC Pittsburgh with veteran patients and their spouses or caregivers.*

*Related research:* [*VAMC Pittsburgh: Author experience*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aXxNoAwtGVfSc7s4HnI_HVsZYR26SaNoRYglu7juXNw/edit#) *with authors who currently use or maintain the Teamsite content management system*

## Study goals

### Veteran patients and their spouses (or caregivers)

* The medical center is the entry point to the VA and VA-sponsored benefits. Why and how? Is anything needed?
  + Assess journeys from veteran patient needs > to the VAMC Pittsburgh > to (if observed) other VA-sponsored benefits
  + Will patients seek other benefits while here? If so which and how did they learn about them?
  + State versus local benefits
  + Learn if locations can inform cross-linking
* Discover if/how visitors to VAMC Pittsburgh interact with facility's website, pittsburgh.va.gov
  + Pinpoint successful or unsuccessful wayfinding patterns
  + Learn where the website succeeding and falling short in supporting needs

## 

## Experiences to be tested

* Use of pittsburgh.va.gov on desktop and mobile, plus any other sites veterans use as part of their journeys
* Organization and priority of content on pittsburgh.va.gov
  + Learn how/if audience hubs fit into the IA
* Patient and spouse user journey to VAMC Pittsburgh and other VA-sponsored benefits

## 

## Behaviors to influence

* Can digital properties provide as meaningful an entry point as medical centers?
* Can the veteran patient journey be improved with content or digital tools

## Methodology

* **Informed consent** – participants will be given a consent form which includes:
  + How information from the interview will be used. What rights the participant has during and after the interview.
  + Consenting to the following (all optional, can pick and choose):
    - The participant can be interviewed for research purposes.
    - Researchers can take notes during the interview.
    - Researchers can record the interview.
    - Researchers can take photos during the interview.
    - Who has access to the participant's raw data.
* **20-minute 1:1 moderated live interviews** with veteran patients and caregivers
  + 10-15 will be asked about their journey to VAMC Pittsburgh and their awareness of other benefits on entering and (if possible) exiting (mapping/generative technique)
  + 10-15 will be asked to do a card sort to organize information contained in pittsburgh.va.gov's existing IA (associative technique)
  + 10-15 will be asked to perform relevant tasks using the internet and Pittsburgh.va.gov (task and site elicitation)
* **Incentives**: A $25 Amazon gift card will be offered as an incentive for participation to each veteran patient or caregiver who completes the lobby study
* **Recruiting:** participants who walk into the the VAMC Pittsburgh will be asked to join researchers at a table set up in a nearby lobby/waiting area, a VAMC Pittsburgh cafeteria or waiting area of a primary care doctor [TBD, ask Jeff Barnes for doctor names so we can obtain clearance].
  + [Flyer](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/user-research/participant-recruitment-flyer.docx)
* **Screening:**
  + Up to 40 veteran patients and spouses who enter the VAMC Pittsburgh lobby or waiting area January 15, 16, or 17th, 2019
  + A range of ages, mobility, vision, genders, ethnicities
  + Non-native tech users, E.g. those who use the ID Me workflow [per Jeff]
  + Do not approach anyone for participation who is visibly in distress
  + A*sk Jeff Barnes about any other disqualifying factors*
* [**Conversation guide**](#kiol3ljfkn3l)
* **Debriefing:** The lobby study researchers will debrief at lunch and at the end of each day using the [debrief guide](#4nvugrllz7tj)
* **Research artifacts:** Verbatim notes, dimension scoring, debrief notes, diagrams, card sorts will be organized and stored on our team's Confluence
* **Analysis:** Key findings will be presented informally. The research will feed directly into design iteration.

## Related Research

* [VA.gov Modernization External Stakeholders, User Understanding Matrix](https://va-gov.atlassian.net/wiki/download/attachments/4948050/VA.gov_External%20Stakeholders_User_Understanding_Matrix.docx?version=1&modificationDate=1540478422417&cacheVersion=1&api=v2)

# Timeline

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **When** | **Milestone** | **Who** |
| 1/4 | Ensure field logistics are in order  Book travel | Kennedy |
| 1/7 | Finalize stimulus (E.g. card sort of pittsburgh.va.gov) and conversation guides | Kennedy |
| 1/8-1/10 | Onsite at VAMC Pittsburgh |  |
| 1/11-1/15 | Synthesize research findings. | Meghan Casey  Kennedy |
| 1/16 | Share topline findings to ensure alignment prior to iteration | Meghan Casey  Kennedy |
|  | Design iteration | Kennedy |
|  | Share work-in-progress designs and roadmap with internal stakeholders | Kennedy  DSVA team |

# Research Materials

[Conversation guide, Veteran patient](#kiol3ljfkn3l)

[Debrief Guide](#4nvugrllz7tj)

## Veteran patient conversation guide WIP

### Greeting

Hello, thank you for joining us today!

You have about 15-20 minutes to answer a few questions for us?

Once complete, we'll email you a $25 Amazon gift card at the email you choose.

### Informed constent (~2m)

Add link to informed consent [obtain from Jeff], here is [an example of one Nava uses](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1lKBY8GVpWFHvfg7_H7V1P9bSb8J5U8LGWZpNJcabRvY/viewform?edit_requested=true)

### About the study (~3m)

* As I speak to you today, I may sound like I’m asking “why” a lot. That’s because I want to make sure I capture your details correctly.
* Before I ask you a few background questions, I want to remind you that your job is really easy, you just have to be yourself and act as you naturally would.
* I did not design anything you're going to look at today, I’m just collecting feedback.
* As we talk today, please be honest with your positive and negative thoughts.
* Nothing you say will hurt my feelings.
* I will now begin recording the session (Make sure to tap record!)

### Background

* Confirm a HIPPA-compliant way to ask (if this question is needed) Are you a veteran? When did you serve and which branch? *Thank you for your service.*
* Is this your local medical center? Have you been to any other veteran medical centers? If yes, how does this one compare?
* Did you use any website for your visit today? If yes, please explain. If no, did you make the appointment or prepare for the visit today? If so, how?
* Are you involved in any groups with other veterans? If yes, why? If no, why?

Thank you for answering those!

### Interview questions

* **User journey** to VAMC Pittsburgh and their awareness of other benefits on entering and (if possible) exiting.
  + Researcher: ensure HIPPA/privacy compliance throughout the interview.
  + How did you learn about the Pittsburgh VA medical center?
  + Other than healthcare benefits, do you use any other benefits from the VA?
    - How did you learn about these benefits?
    - When did you sign up for them?
    - How did you sign up for them?
      * Do/have you apply(ied) for VA benefits or services online before?
    - What other types of benefits do you wish the VA would offer?
    - How would you go about finding out whether the wished-for [use the words the participant used earlier] benefits are offered?
  + When did you begin planning your visit today?
    - Researcher: write the participant's steps on post-it notes (1 per step) and place them on your clipboard
    - How did you plan for your visit today?
    - Yes or no, did you prepare in any way to make sure you have a satisfactory visit?
    - Researcher: share your clipboard with the described journey to the participant
    - Would you use a post-it note to list any steps we didn't cover? Feel free to edit any that I may have gotten wrong.
  + Would you be able to text me at the end of your visit so I can ask one more question and confirm that you received the gift card?
    - Researcher: don't share until after the visit.
      * Did you learn of any new benefits during this visit?
* **Card sort** to organize information contained in pittsburgh.va.gov's existing IA
  + Note to researchers: set it up in optimal sort and have index cards as backup
  + Each card in this stack has the name of something that you might see on the website. I’d like you to organize the cards into groups that make sense to you. Take as much time as you need. There are no right or wrong groupings. Try to organize all the cards, but not everything needs to belong in a group. You won’t have to provide a reason why cards belong in the same group, so if a group feels right, go with it. You also don’t need to think about how this group might relate to the design of a website. Focus on what makes sense to you, not what may make sense to anyone else.
    - Can you tell me why you made each of these groups?
    - Which card is the best example of each group?
    - Which groups were easiest to assemble? Which were hardest? Why?
* **Perform relevant tasks** using the internet and Pittsburgh.va.gov
  + Researcher: make sure to have screen recording on
  + You mentioned you used x or y website as part of your visit today. Using this computer, would you recreate those steps for me and think aloud as you go?
  + Follow up questions:
    - What else do you need to know about this topic?
    - Did you find all the information you expected to see?
    - Did the amount of information feel right to you?
    - Will you use another site, blog, app, or print publication to help you find what you were looking for today?
    - How would you describe the amount of time you spent on this?
    - At any point did you feel lost? What would have helped you get back on track?
    - Would you look for something else while you’re here?

### Wrap up questions

* Why do people use pittsburgh.va.gov?
* Can you give me 3 words that describe your experience today?
* Who else should we speak to for this research? Not a specific person, a type of person.

### Exit

* Well [participant name] that does it for us. Your input is very important to us and I want to thank you.
* May I confirm your email address so I’m sure I send the Amazon gift card to the right place?
* We’ll email that to you within 24 hours.

## Debrief Guide: Post Research Sessions

Debriefing Mindset: Instigate and push the team to widen the field of association and encourage them to experience the world in novel or original ways. Provoke ideation and push the team in extreme directions, listening for wherever a person says, “it’s like...” or “it’s almost like...” and tease out insight from there.

* What did participants do? List a few activities that relate to what they were trying to accomplish.
* How did participants characterize what they did? Use their words.
* What did you see going on?
* What surprised you?
* What did you learn in that session?
* What questions do you have from here?

## Synthesis and Analysis

* Link to Mural synthesis
* Link to Topline findings
  + **User journey** to VAMC Pittsburgh and their awareness of other benefits on entering and (if possible) exiting.
  + **Card sort** to organize information in pittsburgh.va.gov's existing IA
  + **Perform relevant tasks** using the internet and Pittsburgh.va.gov