# Research Plan VAOS

## RQs

- How well does our strategy of "only showing Veterans options that they have" within VAOS work w/r/t user flow?

- Do users know what they can do in VAOS?

- What is the user's "goal" or "mental process" for scheduling an appointment?

- i.e. Do they think about Type of care first? Provider? Location? Health concern?

- Do the new approaches to the flows inspire more/less confidence for Veterans regarding booking appointments online for VA or CC appointments?

- Do the new user interface and user experience components introduce any pain points or confusion?

- i.e. How well does our handling of "confirm address" / "choose VA location" flow?

- i.e. Does the time selection tool make sense?

- i.e. Are Veterans confused by the community care options?

- Do Veterans understand the difference between pending and scheduled appointments?

- Is "pending" a word that resonates?

- What content / additional content is needed to facilitate decision support at key moments in the appointment scheduling process?

**# Intro**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Lauren and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we're going to talk about scheduling doctor's appointments.

Before we start, a few things I want to mention:

- \*\*This entire session should take about 1 hour.\*\*

- \*\*In this session, we want to hear your honest opinions.\*\* We are not testing your ability. We just want to improve these tools to better meet Veteran's needs. I will not be offended by any opinions you express, and I welcome your feedback.

- \*\*You'll be interacting with a prototype and a demo tool.\*\* This is a demo tool that may not function exactly the way you expect. Some areas of the prototype will be clickable, and some will not. Since it's a demo, none of your actions will affect your actual VA information or benefits.

- \*\*If for any reason and at any time you want to stop the session, please let me know.\*\*

- \*\*Are you comfortable if I record my screen and audio as we talk today?\*\* We use the recordings to confirm that we have captured your opinions accurately. The recordings are destroyed after we complete analysis, and none of your comments will be attributed to you directly.

- If yes: \*\*Once I start recording, I am going to confirm that you are ok with me recording this session once more.\*\*

\*Start recording.\*

- \*\*I have started recording. I'd like to confirm: Are you comfortable if I record my screen the audio as we talk today?"\*\*

Okay.

Reconfirmation- Yes I am.

**## Warm Up**

\*\*What are the different ways that you know of that you can schedule an appointment with a VA doctor?\*\*

You can go to the health part of ebenfits but I normally go through MyVAhealth for the information and appointments.

- If Veteran DOES mention VAOS/online scheduling:

- \*\*Have you ever used this service?\*\*

Yes.

- \*\*What kinds of appointments have you booked online?\*\*

It was a dental appointment.

- \*\*How was that experience?\*\*

It wasn’t hard, it was really easy. I was computer savvy and it is easy for me to get around to make prescriptions and appointments. Especially to confirm when an appointment is.

- \*\*To your knowledge, what other health care specialties or appointment types can you book online?\*\*

Your primary care, I don’t believe you can do it for specialty care only primary care.

- If participant DOES NOT mention online scheduling:

- \*\*Has your provider or anyone at a VAMC ever told you about online scheduling at VA?\*\*

- \*\*Would you ever consider booking a VA appointment online?\*\*

- \*\*What types of appointments or health care specialty types would you expect to be able to book online?\*\*

**## Home Screen**

- \*\*Take a moment to look at this screen.\*\* [ pause ] \*\*What are the different actions that you can take from this screen?\*\*

You can make an appointment and or confirm, cancel an appointment and see your history of previous appointments.

- follow-up: \*\*Are there any tasks you think you might need to be able to do related to appointment scheduling or management, but do not see here? \*\*

No.

- \*\*I'd like to call your attention to the option, "Manage your care." What actions do you expect that you could take if you clicked on that button?\*\*

You would be able to confirm, there are many of options, call, text or this app to confirm that you will be at your appointments and see your pervious appointments as well.

- If participant does not mention cancel: \*\*"Do you think you should be able to cancel an appointment if you clicked on "manage your appointments"?\*\*

Well honestly I think I tried that once, but it didn’t help so I call and I pretty much use everything off of ebenfits, fill prescriptions and talk to my doctor but to cancel I still have to call.

**## Community Care Task**

[start on home screen]

- \*\*What does "community care from VA" mean to you?\*\*

To me it means off site locations where you can seek medical attention without going to the facility. Exactly.

Mission act?

No.

- \*\*How about the phrase "urgent care?" What does that mean to you?\*\*

Well that you can go to the ER if it is an emergency but that is all I can think of.

Express care- No, I have never heard it being used in relation to the va either.

- \*\*To your knowledge is there a difference between Community Care through the VA and Urgent Care through the VA?\*\*

- \*\*Do you know if you are eligible to use community care services from VA? \*\*

Okay, I have used VA choice for appointments that are 90 day choice to go to a doctor in the private sector to be seen and for physical therapy as well.

Community care – it is known as VA choice.

- If appropriate: \*\*Have you ever used Community Care services paid for by the VA?\*\*

- \*\*Did you know that you can book some types of community care online?\*\*

I didn’t if my primary care wanted to send me to someone like colonoscopy and they are backed up within the system. Someone calls me and I get a letter confirming the VA choice. It doesn’t always work. Recently I have received a bill because my doctor sends me someone else for mammogram and it’s the second time, so I don’t know if they know it is VA choice or if someone is dropping the ball. I was going to say when you go in va health website and pull up the medical records all of it is on there so I can see the letter for VA choice sent for the care that the doctor placed in the system.

- IF appropriate: \*\*Would you consider booking a community care appointment online?\*\*

No, I thought the doctor had to do it. I absolutely would because I have had issues such as getting them to pay or follow up. My doctors passes the information to someone else and sometimes they don’t contact me, and it takes awhile to get the appointments.

- \*\*Have you ever used urgent care services in the community (either from VA or a private facility?\*\*)

Yes, as a private citizen like an urgent care section but not on the VA’s behalf. Correct. I have been sent from the VA to a doctor. I know urgent care is someone important. I have been sick for a month and they have sent me to the hospital in an ambulance.

- IF appropriate: \*\*Did you make an appointment or just go in?\*\*

I just go in. Like I said I talk to my doctor before she retired because I had been with her for 12 years. When I had a question that would be serious enough to go to the hospital I talked to her first. Yes absolutely.

- IF appropriate: \*\*Did you check your eligibility before going to that appointment?\*\*

- IF appropriate: \*\*Why/Why not?\*\*

- IF appropriate: \*\*How did you check?\*\*

- \*\*Today we are going to create a new appointment.\*\*

**[Address screen - first time participant sees this screen]**

\*\*- Why do you think we are asking you to confirm your address?\*\*

I guess for the confirmation within the mail that the appointment is set, they need the correct address, so it gets to me. I just thought of the location as well because with VA choice they would ask what area of town I wanted my appointment in so that’s another reason why it is important.

- \*\*What do you think would happen if you wanted to change your address?\*\*

Well the address can be updated for different reasons like you not getting the medicine, I had that happen when I moved a few years ago so I don’t think it got changed in every area of the VA.

Confident in app- Very comfortable in it I don’t see an issue whatsoever. It makes sense to have that part of the process.

Next- I would click continue.

**[Type of care/provider - first time participant sees this screen]**

- \*\*Think back to the last time you made a VA appointment. This is a bit of a weird question, but what was your goal for making that appointment?\*\*

The reason I made it was because it is a difficult path to get in contact with someone and they have an issue with getting the message with the doctor, after making calls I did not get a call back, so I just made an appointment.

- Follow-up if needed: What was the driving force that prompted you to make that appointment?

- \*\*Did you want to see a specific doctor? \*\*

- \*\*Were you trying to see a certain type of specialist, i.e. a podiatrist? \*\*

- \*\*Were you trying to go to a specific location for your care?\*\*

- \*\*Or perhaps, did you have a medical concern or problem that you were hoping to address?\*\*

- \*\*What do you expect would happen if you chose provider?\*\*

There is always a list of different people within the message center that are within your individual care. Before they used to call it colors and the list of doctors that could take care of the veteran.

- Can you think of a situation when you might choose this option?

- \*\*What do you expect would happen if you chose type of care??\*\*

I would assume it is a specialty, I don’t believe as a veteran this is something we can do. Like a GI doctor without the direct referral from the primary care. I know who my doctors are and if I wanted an appointment I would choose my doctor. Correct.

- Can you think of a situation when you might choose this option?

- \*\*Which of these options do you see yourself using more often?\*\*

- \*\*Is there an option missing that you might prefer?\*\*

No, I don’t see anything.

- \*\*For this task, we are going to select "type of care"\*\*

**[Type of care screen]**

- \*\*Take a moment to look at this screen. [ pause] What questions do you have after looking at this screen?\*\*

Well one of the things I know is that it is highly limits for specialty care, and I didn’t think you’d be able to do that without approval from a different doctor.

- Potential follow-up question if appropriate: \*\*Have you heard of all of these different types of care?\*\*

Yes, beside of amputation care.

- Potential follow up question, if appropriate: \*\*Would you group these types of care into different categories?\*\*

Yes. I do not go to the VA for everything I have private doctors as well. When I went out to the private care I always sent it to my doctor because I knew her, and she would ensure it was in the system. GI and oncology have been used prior.

Book them online- No not at all.

Why- Because it has been so in detail and they would need to know the issue and the veteran wouldn’t be able to explain it. The primary doctor would have to explain. I have a colonoscopy each year and the doctor has had to schedule it each year and then contact me,

- \*\*Are all of the types of care that you currently receive from VA reflected on this screen?\*\*

- IF yes, continue

- If no: \*\*Do you expect to be able to book that type of appointment online?\*\*

- \*\*Can you think of a reason why you might not be able to book [those types of] appointments online?\*\*

- \*\*For today, we are going to book an audiology appointment.\*\*

**[Choose VA or CC]**

- \*\*I'm going to give you a moment to look at this screen. [ pause ] Why do you think you are being given this choice?\*\*

Because they are trying to make it convenience and idea for the different locations that would benefit the veteran as it relates to their care.

- If appropriate, follow-up: \*\*Based on seeing this screen, do you think you are eligible to receive audiology care from a community care provider?\*\*

I don’t know because I don’t under that community care faculty like if you go do you have to be 100 percent.

Va choice- again initially I don’t know if the choice program has changed. Choice program you could not just say you didn’t want to go to the va you had to be 40 minutes away =before you would even qualify. I have numerous appointments but don’t know if it changed or what. I would prefer to have it outside because normally you cannot get into the va to see someone because they are always booked and one of the biggest issues with them.

- \*\*If you were booking this appointment on your own today, which would you choose: VA or CC?\*\*

Community care, correct.

**[Audiology choice]**

- \*\*I'm going to give you a moment to look at this screen. \*\*

- \*\*Why do you think you are being given this choice?\*\*

Because it is going to narrow down the needs the veterans has,

- If appropriate: \*\*What additional information would you want to know to help you make a choice?\*\*

No, I think this is pretty clear. Routine is routine and hear aid support already says you have an issue,

**[Select Date]**

- \*\*Talk me through how you would complete this screen if you were doing this on your own. How would you go about picking these dates?\*\*

Well I would start with the day that would be good for me then if it is unavailable the others that I would have selected I would hope would be available to set the appointments.

- Follow-up if needed: \*\*Is there any additional information you would want to know in order to select dates for this appointment?\*\*

Well unless the next screen has times I would prefer to see that was well. I would assume it would all be on one screen but if it is on the next that’s fine.

Times defined- absolutely.

Expectations- Well actually yeah after the preferred dates or if any of the dates are available I would be booking it.

**[ Provider preferences: provider name]**

- \*\*Talk me through your thought process when looking at this screen.\*\*

Well I guess for me I have numerous health issues, provides in private and va sectors and don’t always feel like I can get appointments when needed. If I prefer to have someone out there rather than the va that would be good.

- \*\*What are you being asked to do on this screen?\*\*

It is saying if we prefer a private care doctor see us rather than the VA then it would be a determining factor for the dates. Then be seen sooner rather than later.

- \*\*Why do you think you're being asked this question?\*\*

- \*\*What questions do you have?\*\*

- If appropriate: \*\*Do you know the names of community care providers?\*\*

Absolutely.

- \*\*How would you go about getting the information to complete this screen?\*\*

I would like yes.

**[ Provider preferences: distance language time]**

- \*\*Talk me through your thought process when looking at this screen. \*\*

I have a list and I know who my providers are so I could put their information and the location of them. I would go through my records and place the information that is required.

I would click continue

- \*\*What can you do on this screen?\*\*

- \*\*What questions do you have?\*\*

- \*\*Why do you think you are being asked this information?\*\*

**[communication preferences]**

- \*\*Talk me through your thought process when looking at this screen.\*\*

It is making it better for the individual on the other end to determine how many miles, like VA choice you have to be 40 miles from the va to qualify, so I don’t really know. I will assume if I want the least number of miles away from my home I could pick that.

Close to home- correct.

The information is the questions to communicate the appointment times and current email and home/cell phone number.

- \*\*What can you do on this screen?\*\*

- \*\*Do you have a preference for how you would want to receive communication from VA about this appointment?\*\*

No, I don’t, it doesn’t matter to me. I get them from online to my cellphone, so I am used to all of them.

- \*\*Why do you prefer that method/those methods?

- \*\*What questions do you have?\*\*

No.

**[Review]**

- \*\*Talk me through your thought process when looking at this screen.\*\*

Just reviewing the information, I had previous typed, dated, and optional dates.

- \*\*What questions do you have?\*\*

Nope.

**[Your appointment is pending]**

- \*\*Talk me through your thought process when looking at this screen.\*\*

It is just telling you that you are pending request, and someone need to call to confirm the appointment. It is not confirmed until someone in the office confirms that the date is available

- \*\*On a scale from 1 to 3 where 1 is not confident; 2 is somewhat confident, and 3 is very confident, how confident do you feel that you have a confirmed community care appointment?\*\*

- \*\*Based on what you have read here, what are the next steps in confirming or scheduling your community care appointment?\*\*

- \*\*Do you think you need to do anything else at this time?\*\*

No other than ensuring that my information is correct.

- \*\*What will make you feel confident that you have a confirmed appointment?\*\*

An email saying that the appointment is confirmed. To tell me that I did this, and it is pending, I would want that in my email so I can take that and get information for when I call to see what is going on.

- \*\*What additional information would you want to know at this point?\*\*

No because pretty much maybe a phone number but it would send you to the office then transfer you.

- \*\*Was there anything confusing on the screens you just saw?\*\*

Nope.

**## CC - VA Flow**

**[Type of Care]**

- \*\*I am going to take us back to that screen when we selected a type of care. This time we are going to select "primary care", which will give us different options to talk about.\*\*

**[Select a VA network/facility]**

- \*\*I'm going to give you a moment to look at this screen. What are you being asked to choose on this screen?\*\*

Whether or not you want it at the main facility or the satellite facility. I think why this has different states I don’t know what VA bay Pines is.

- Why do you think you are being asked this?

I don’t know because this is directed at the veteran so they should know the location in which you live so why is there a different state.

Location for you- no but like I am in GA so there is the hospital then community facility so I would think it would be listed that way.

- Why do you think you might be seeing multiple locations?

This is the only one that is available

- \*\*Based on what you see on this screen, do you think you are eligible to receive primary care from a community care provider?\*\*

I don’t know I kind of what to say no.

Why- I feel like the primary care doctor is the backbone of the health issues and they would have the records. My primary doctor can get my prescriptions so I guess you would need someone in house, a private doctor who would put it in the system.

VA for primary care- Exactly, because the VA won’t pay for the medication for that visit. It is okay to pay for some of your medication but not all it is expensive.

**[Why appointment]**

- \*\*Why do you think you're being asked this question?\*\*

I assume because it will make a difference in how quickly they can make an appointment.

- \*\*In which circumstances would you use the different options listed here?\*\*

If it is something new that is happen that’s why they would want to know that it is new and medication concerns if you have questions to your health and counite to take it are concerns that would need to be addressed sooner.

- \*\*Do you need any additional information to help you make this selection?\*\*

**[ how would you like to be seen]**

- \*\*What are you being asked about on this screen?\*\*

I don’t know what telehealth is, but office visits and phone call is self-explanatory. I didn’t think they would call you, never mind I am thinking something else. It could be either, I don’t get it, do nurses and doctors call to give medical advice over the phone. If you don’t have a good relationship with the doctor I don’t think you would want to be diagnosed over the phone and I don’t know what telehealth is.

Video visit- okay so it’s like computers where they can see you and you can see them. I would like that. Correct.

- If appropriate: \*\*Would you ever consider requesting a phone call or telehealth appointment with your provider?\*\*

Telehealth

- If appropriate: \*\*Can you describe circumstances in your own life when you might consider using these different options?\*\*

It is more personal and can understand what you are trying to explain if they can see you verse a phone call.

- If appropriate: \*\*If your provider suggested a telehealth or phone call appointment, would you consider it?\*\*

Yes, I sure would. Not the phone call but the video call yes.

- \*\*Do you want any additional information to help you make this choice?\*\*

No

**[appointment time - calendar time select view]**

\*\*- What are you being asked to do on this screen?\*\*

To click the days that you are available.

- \*\*Share any feedback you have on this format. Is it useful or not useful? \*\*

I like this one better because it not only tells you the date but the day of the week.

Useful or not- I would have preferred the times but again if it is on the next page great. I prefer them to be on the same page.

- \*\*Is there anything you find confusing about this format? \*\*

No, not at all.

Click blue arrow- it would take you to another month.

**[Review]**

- \*\*Talk me through your thought process when looking at this screen.\*\*

Now you provide the number for them to confirm the best time for the appointment.

Different options- No preference.

- \*\*What questions do you have?\*\*

**[Your appointment is confirmed]**

- \*\*Talk me through your thought process when looking at this screen.\*\*

It outlines the appointment I booked and the time zone for my appointment.

- \*\*On a scale from 1 to 3 where 1 is not confident; 2 is somewhat confident, and 3 is very confident, how confident do you feel that you have a confirmed appointment?\*\*

- \*\*Do you think you need to do anything else at this time?

- What will make you feel confident that you have a confirmed appointment?

I would be very confident, again you can go into ebenefits or my vet site and see it there. It may take a few hours to catch up it will be there for you to see so if it is confirmed I am confident that it will be there.

Myhealthevet- Yeah that’s what I meant when I say my health.

- What additional information would you want to know at this point?

**## Wrap-Up**

- Do you have any other feedback about the two scenarios we just went through?

Nope.

- Do you have any other questions for me about the two flows you just saw?

No, I do not have any questions.

Well we really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Your feedback is so helpful to us as we continue to work on the site and make sure it really works for Veterans.

Thanks! Lastly, do you know any other Veterans, caregivers, or service members who might be willing to participate in a future user research session? If Yes: Thank you! I'll have our team send you an email with a little blurb that you can pass along.

Great, well thank you so much again, and enjoy the rest of your day!