**Conversation Guide – Participant 12**

3/16/2022 – 3:15pm ET

[Prototype Link](https://www.sketch.com/s/908b453b-ef8b-4193-b955-ea00f9fd14aa/a/jgzLvgz/play?hotspots=false)

**Moderator logistics**

*Use*[#feedback-backchannel](https://dsva.slack.com/messages/C40B45NJK/details/)*in Slack for real-time feedback from observers.*

*Mute your Slack notifications*

*Before the session, send out the*[observer instructions](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/platform/research/during-research/howto-observer-instructions.md)*to your observers (Slackbot will do this for you if you type "observer instructions" into*[#feedback-backchannel](https://dsva.slack.com/channels/feedback-backchannel)*).*

*In the Attendees section, make sure everyone except the participant is on mute.*

*In the Participant "more" menu, make sure "Play Join and Leave Sound" is unchecked*

*Check your [screensharing setup] and share permissions for participants.*

*When the participant is ready, begin the session with the following intro*

**Intro - 5 minutes**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Lauryl and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we're going to show you some early ideas related to accessing and managing your VA healthcare online.

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

* **This entire session should take about 1 hour.** I want to be sure not to keep you much longer, so I may occasionally prompt you with the next question or topic.
* **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 Demo.** This is a demo and not a live website, parts may not function exactly the way you expect. Some areas of the prototype will be clickable, and some will not. Just let me know what you'd expect to happen in that case. 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 and the audio as we talk today?

**Warm-up Questions - 5-10 minutes**

P11 has about 80% hearing loss.

* Do you have healthcare through the VA? How do you manage your healthcare benefits? How would you like to manage your benefits?

Yes, I do.

* Do you have other benefits through the VA? How do you manage your healthcare benefits? How would you like to manage your benefits?

Lately I interact with the VA almost every other week.

Had knee and back surgeries last year and this year.

I also have private insurance.

**How do you interact with VA?**

Everything goes through my doctor who is assigned to me.   
We discuss my overall health about once a year.

Possible blockage in artery. Need to see doctor again soon.

Hearing doctor says he can’t do much more to help.

Dermatologist – I saw this doctor recently because I thought I might have skin cancer.

I see a therapist about once a month for PTSD. Have been doing this for 2-3 years.

Dentist also, but that has dropped off because of COVID.

Physical therapist – will be going back to her for my knee and back.

“I’d say I’m pretty deeply involved with health care at the VA. It didn’t used to be that way.” Recently VA has been getting more in touch with Veterans.

* Have you used MyHealtheVet? If Yes, how often do you use it? What do you use it for? What would you change about MHV?

Yes, see below.

* Do you use secure messaging now? What for? How often? What would you change about it?

Yes, I communicate with VA this way.

VA really makes sure you get to the hospital or the outpatient clinic.   
I’d say they send me 2-3 pieces of mail every other day.   
“You feel like they’re watching you.”

Use secure messaging to talk to my doctors.   
I don’t call them because it’s impossible to get them on the phone.

When I worked, I got used to sending emails when I had a question.

(About secure messaging:) “I would say that is my choice for speaking to any of my doctors. I shoot ‘em an email…”

* [have participant open up a browser] You got an email from the VA that there's a new way to look at all your healthcare needs in one place, but you can't remember what it was called. How would you find it?[if needed, direct participant to open VA.gov homepage] Where would you expect to find it on VA.gov?

“Every few months, I go through the website just to see if anything’s new.”

“I don’t have the fear that a lot of people have with the VA.” I hear stories about VA being bad.

I’ve been with VA since 1968 (?). [Note taker could not hear the year clearly because of the Internet connection.]  
Since then, VA has come a long way.

I keep up with My HealtheVet and “My Health VA.”

“I put my life in their hands, so I have pretty solid trust in them.”

**Health Apartment homepage, unauth - 5 minutes**

I’ve noticed the VA is going to a new sign-in process, rather than using the old 2-step. It doesn’t work for me. I have to go back to the old process.

He had a bit of trouble screen sharing.

* What are you seeing here?

I’m seeing the address to the DSVA to everyone (referring to the Zoom windows), sign in, and view all in Pharmacy, Appointments, Messages, and Medical Records.

[He scrolled down the unauth MHV main landing page…]

I see top tasks in health, pay VA copay bills, travel pay, COVID screener tool (“I’ve never done that”), Disability benefits, maximize benefits, see what else you might be eligible for.

(Then he read through the items in Resources. And he moused over the VA.gov footer, reading the subheads. Then read through the sub-footer, the last line in the VA.gov footer, which has accessibility, civil rights, privacy, etc.)

* (if they noticed MHV branding) What does that mean to you?
* What are you able to do on this page?
* Now that you've seen this page, where would you expect to find it on the VA.gov website?

“Probably the opening page because if I click on a website, I would expect this page to come up because it looks like a broken down index.”

**What would you say this is the main page for?**

Long pause.

**If you came to the main VA page, how would you get to this page?**

First I would go into the browser, US Department of Veterans Affairs, get the address for this, then click on it and expect it to open.

* Talk to me about the links that you're seeing on this page (dig into side nav if they bring it up)
* How would you sign in?

I go thru 2 steps.

Sign in is on there twice so people won’t miss it.

I go to My HealtheVet website; it’s 2 steps. “I just use my login credentials.”

“The page is well done. It has all the information I need to know to get to the point to check my appointments, do the things I need to do… “It encompasses the entire website with this page, and then you can go into the subsections.”

* What do you think you'd see if you were to sign in? (have participant click thru login to auth'ed version of the page)

**Things to watch for:**

* Do they notice this is MHV branded?
* Do they expect to see something different if signed in or not?
* How do they expect to get to this page? How does it relate to the bigger VA.gov site?

**Health Apartment homepage, auth - 5 minutes**

* What's different about this page? What website is this?

“It automatically gives me all the information I need to know without having to go to all the separate ones. I really like that.”

The thing with VA is you have to go to so many sites, and you lose your sign in.

“This really makes it simple.” I know what I’ve got in my appointments. I can see everything I need to see just by clicking on sign in.”

I would click on a prescription, and it would show me the information. If I was looking for something not up there, it says 2 more active prescriptions, so I would click on view all in Pharmacy and I would see what I need to see.

* Where do you think the information you're seeing is coming from?
* What are you able to do from this page?
* What is missing from this page? What information would be useful for you to see here?
* Medical Records: Let's say you needed to get a copy of your vaccine records, how would you do that from here? (before clicking) What would you expect to see here? Who's data would be here?
* Pharmacy: Let's say you needed to check on a prescription, how would you do that from here? (before clicking) What would you expect to see here?
* Messages: You want to send a message to your doctor, how would you do that from here? (before clicking) What would you expect to see here?
* Appointments: You want to check all your upcoming appointments, how would you do that from here? (before clicking) What would you expect to see here?

**Things to watch for:**

* Do Veterans notice the info shown is now personalized?
* Are Veterans successfully able to complete the tasks?
* Does their understanding of what actions you can take on this page change once they see the logged in version?

**Medical Records - 5-10 minutes**

* What are you seeing here? What would you come here to do?
* Your doctor has asked you to record how much you walk these days, how would you do that from here?
* How would you check your most recent lab results?
* How would you see all your labs and tests?
* You need to get a copy of all your VA medical records to take to a community care visit, how would you do that?
* You had an Xray a few months ago and you want to check it out again, how would you do it?
* What does Blue Button mean to you?
* Have you downloaded medical info from the VA (or other providers?) before? What was that experience like? Did you have any issues? How did you resolve them?
* What is missing that you'd expect to see here?
* Let's say you needed to check on a prescription, how would you do that from here? (before clicking) What would you expect to see here?

**Things to watch for:**

* Does it make sense to have patient entered data on this page? Do Veterans find it useful?
* Do veterans understand the difference between Health Summary and Blue Button and why/when they would need them?
* Do they understand they are seeing recent stuff and not all, and how would they get to all?
* Are Veterans successfully able to complete the tasks?

**Pharmacy - 5-10 minutes**

One of my biggest pet peeves is that when I use a cell phone, which I use a lot, I have to keep scrolling across to see what each one of them says. If this fits the way I think it does, that’s great.

“It’s a good layout. The other one is so wide. It’s got info you’re not going to use anyway.”

“You can make sure because you can see the whole thing, that you’re not clicking on the wrong medication.”

* What can you do from here?
* Let’s say you needed to refill some prescriptions, how would you do that?

Click refill. [He mousing over a blue “refill” button.]

* How would you receive this Rx? (If by mail) What address would you expect it go to?

It will come to me in the mail.

**What address would it go to?**  
My home.

* How many medications can you refill right now, based on what you see here?

Two.

* Why aren’t you able to refill some medications? What does Renew mean here? What would you expect to happen if you clicked that?

**Why can’t you refill more than 2 prescriptions? Why are only 2 refillable?**Because they project how long the medication will last and then they give you time to refill it. Which I discovered recently that is not that long.

If it doesn’t say refill but it says it’s on its way or it’s in progress, there won’t be anything you need to do.

If it says contact your doctor, then he has to renew it, and it will be sent to you.

* You requested a refill a while back and want to get an update on when it’ll arrive. How would you do that?

“It’ll have it in there, golly it comes over in about 5 different forms… When I get a refill, I get notified on my cell phone, I get notified on my email, and I also get notified by the post office that they have it. And it tells me that VA is sending me a refill of something.” Usually I can figure out what is coming.

I just got one today. Comes in a white bag with information on the medication. Has information on things to be aware of, things to avoid.

I can also track it on here.

I don’t like that every so often I have to contact my doc for a refill.

“It gives you all the info you need. There is no question.”

Expiring soon, delivered, in progress, in transit. This is more info than is on there now.

“I would probably darken the print a bit because your eye is not drawn to it right away.”

“In progress” means they’re putting it together. Pharmacist is working on it.

“In transit” means it’s in the mail.

“Renew soon” means I probably have a couple weeks, probably a couple weeks left but I need to renew it now so I don’t run out.

* What other things can you do on this page? (If they notice Other Medication + Allergies/Reactions action links) Where do you expect that info to go? Who would be able to see that info? What are your thoughts on being able to add that info here?

**What else can you do on this page?**Look at all your health prescriptions.

(Speaking about My HealtheVet:) If you do renew your prescriptions on page 1, and then you flip to page 2, then you have to renew your prescriptions on page 2 also.

Adverse reaction is a good thing because they don’t want to accidentally give you a medication you have a bad reaction to. I had a bad reaction to sulfa drugs.

You can go to the left side of the page and go through your Appointments, Messages, etc.

(Speaking about My HealtheVet:) Now you have to keep going back to the Glossary beyond this page.

I like that I don’t have to start all over again to send a message.

“It’s set up in a very user-friendly way.”

**How would you send your doctor a message from here?**

I’d go click Messages. [He clicked it on the left navigation.]

And I’d go up and compose a message (pointing to compose link in body of page).

And I’d send it to him, my primary care doctor. Tell him I need his approval. Say I need a renewal. I work well with my doctor.

* What's missing from this page?
* You want to check all your upcoming appointments, how would you do that from here? OR How would you get back to that first screen we saw?

**Things to watch for:**

* What would Veterans want to be able to do on this page but can't?
* Do Veterans understand the different types of actions (refill, track, renew, and view all Rx) they can do here? Does it makes sense to them to have that on one page?
* Are Veterans successfully able to complete the tasks?
* If the info listed on this page useful for Veterans?

**Appointments - 5-10 minutes**

* What can you do on this page?
* How would you get more information about your appointment on November 25?
* How would you make an appointment with your doctor?
* (Check-in link) You got an email and VA needs you to fill out some paperwork ahead of your upcoming doctor visit, how might you do that from here?
* Let's say you wanted to sort the appointments you see here, how would you do that?
* What's missing from this page?
* You want to send a message to your doctor, how would you do that from here? OR How would you get back to that first screen we saw?

**Things to watch for:**

* Do Veterans understand that the side navigation has additional tools related to Appointments?
* Are Veterans successfully able to complete the tasks?

**Messages - 5-10 minutes**

* What can you do on this page?
* You remember that you had sent your doctor a message a few months ago with questions about covid testing. How would you find that message?

Well, (paused) I would find it right there, one down. The latest transmission was through Narin Ratana. Narin would have told me I already have an appointment for the COVID.

[He mentioned dates.] Interesting that the initial email is Aug 15 and the follow-up is dated May 3.

I would have that information that she’d given me about my COVID test.

**What would you do if you can’t see it on the first page?**

He scrolled down and saw pagination and said he’d go to the next page.

He read the numbers. 33 total messages.

I don’t know if you can order the messages differently. I would look for the answer to my message. Assume it would be above my message, not below.

**IF you had questions about your messages, how would you find answers?**

It tells me I can compose message and search messages.

If I had to look for one… When you look at messages, it tells you everything you need to know. It also gives you a description of how to use it. [At some point, he was mousing over compose and search at top of page body.]

**When would you use search messages?**

If I was looking for a particular message, I would use a keyword to bring up the message I was looking for.

**How would you read a message?**

Click on the little thing (the dot?). Then open up the message and read it.

[He moused over the dropdown. Said would use the “most recent” tab.]

“Well done.”

**What other options expect to see in the tab?**   
You’ve got your medical records. Good to check them every so often.

“Health care benefits” is good for newbies, to show them what benefits are available to them.

Copay bills and travel pay is good. I usually use the kiosk at the VA.

Resources – I assume this is info that you can read deeper about. I’ve never opened it, so I don’t know what it says.

* You have a new message from your doctor about a recent test result, how would you look at it?
* You want to send your doctor a message about your upcoming appointment, how would you do that?
* Let's say you wanted to see messages just from the last 6 months, how would you do that?
* What other ways would you expect to organize your messages?
* If you had questions about your messages, how would you find answers?
* How would you get back to that first screen we saw?

**How would you go back to the first screen?**   
Hit “1” (under pagination)… I can see we are on page 1 of 33 messages. Go back up and hit Messages again, too. [He was answering how to get between pages 1 and 2 within Messages.)

**What about going back to the first page?**   
I can go back and click on Pharmacy, Appointments, etc. [He clicked around.]

**How would you go back to the page with everything?**

You go all the way back to “My Health,” I think. [He clicked on the breadcrumb.]

**Where would “Home’ take you?**

Home is going to take me back to My VA, or VA Benefits and Health Care. Think VA Benefits and Health Care is where it would most likely take me.

**Things to watch for:**

* Do Veterans understand this is the same functionality as MHV secure messaging?
* Are Veterans successfully able to complete the tasks?

**Post-Task Interview - 2 minutes**

* What are your thoughts about what we looked at today?

“I think you’ve done a good job.”

“This biggest problem with any type of information channel or website is the clutter that you have to dig through to get to the subject you’re looking for.”

My water company shut off my water today. I did not pay my bill because they didn’t send me one. I put my new account on there (on the website), but it was not on there. I am trying to get to my new account, and I discovered they used my cell phone number as my sign in. “The whole point is it was so busy.” Pay your bill and enroll in autopay were the options. I chose autopay, and it automatically set it up for the house I used to have, not this house. Cost me $40.

“People try to overload the information on the computer and drill down to the last bolt.”   
“If you go from the general to the specific, it makes it much easier.” Clicking a lot gets to be aggravating.

“What you set up here gives me the opportunity to go directly to the source… to do what I need to do.”

I worked in computers 5 years after I got out of the military.

“I think you’ve got a good system here where I can go to one page and I can find out what I need to know.” [He mentioned Pharmacy and Messages.]

I don’t know how this will work for people who are not computer literate.

“I think you’ve got a pretty good thing going here.”

* Any other things that would be good for us to know?

**Thank-You and Closing - 2 minutes**

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!