Online Health Care Application

June 2016

Overview of application:

The name of this product is "the health care application". As we build a Veteran-Centered VA, we are calling things exactly what they are, making our products and services clear and understandable. The application is used by Veterans to apply for health care eligibility, and is the first step to being seen at a VA medical facility if they are not yet enrolled. Veterans already receiving health care do not have to fill out this application.

- **A new and simpler way to apply for VA health care.** The application is a HTML form on vets.gov that requires nothing more than an internet connection and 15-45 minutes depending on the complexity of the application.
- **Built in the open.** This means that it is a work in progress. What you see today may look different a month from now, based on usability research we do with Veterans to understand what's working and what's not, but the outcome will remain the same: an easier process for Veterans to apply for health care eligibility.
- **Mobile-responsive.** Vets.gov is built with the mobile user in mind, which means that the health care application can be used easily, even on the go.
- **Log-in not required.** The application can be submitted without a login. We believe it is important to make this process as easy as possible. A log-in option will be added later this year, allowing Veterans to save their application and to update their information, but it won't be required to apply.

Why did VA create a second online application?

- **The current online application does not open for a vast majority of users.** The current online application (Veterans Online Application) is a fillable PDF, and does not open for upwards of 75% of users. VOA requires Internet Explorer and Adobe 8 or 9 to run. Only 18% of web traffic to U.S. government websites comes from Internet Explorer.
- **Why would the VA have an application that doesn't open?** The application was built on Adobe at a time when all browsers defaulted to Adobe as the PDF reader of choice. Since that time, browsers stopped defaulting to Adobe—except for Internet Explorer. Since the application was a fillable PDF, this meant that anyone accessing the application from a browser other than Internet Explorer would have a difficult time opening it.
  - o The new health care application fixes this problem, making it possible for anyone with an internet connection to apply for care.
- **How long after a Veteran applies should they expect to hear back from VA?** Upon completion of the online form, the applicant will receive a confirmation number and a

phone number to call to follow up on the status of their application if they do not hear from the VA within 1 week

- **What should a Veteran do if they have already applied?** Veterans who have already applied for their health care eligibility do not need to reapply through the new health care application process.
- **What will happen to the current Veterans Online Application (VOA)?** Veterans' Online Application (VOA, the current online application) will stay online for approximately one month. The current VOA application will gradually phase out as the new application phases in over the course of the summer. VOA will remain online during the transition process, but it will not be actively promoted.