

# VA Mobile Discussion Series

## Rx Refill App

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Hi everyone. Welcome and thank you for attending our VA Mobile Health Discussion Series webinar. My name is Hannah Webster, and I'm going to run through a few brief technical reminders before we begin the discussion about the Rx Refill App.

Your phone lines should be muted. We'll be taking questions through the chat feature, which is available to you at the right of your screen. If you experience any technical difficulties, please use the chat, and someone will be in touch to offer help. To respect everyone's schedules, we're going to try to keep this moving.

Today we welcome Eric Spahn, Pharm.D., from VA Medication Reconciliation and Patient Med Info Management at Pharmacy Benefits Management, who will lead our presentation. I've mentioned before, if you have any questions for us, please use the chat feature, and we will stop the presentation intermittently to answer those questions. If we don't get to your question, we will send out an email following the webinar with any relevant answers.

With that, I'll turn it over to you, Dr. Spahn.

**ERIC SPAHN:** Great. Thank you for the introduction, and I appreciate you being here today.

Rx Refill is a simple app to help you refill prescriptions that we're looking at releasing in fall of this year. It allows you to refill your refillable VA-issued prescriptions, track VA prescription deliveries, look at your prescription history and access additional medication information on My HealthVet from your mobile device.

When we work with any application, Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM) does a lot of work with both patient and provider-facing pharmacy applications, and Rx Refill is a patient or a caregiver-facing application. We try to think of the Veteran at the kitchen table looking at the bottle and at medication lists to get a good context for decision making. Even if it's just a simple routine thing like refilling medication, you have to consider what it's like on their side.

Before we get to the application itself, I just want to make sure the audience understands what capabilities there are for refilling medications. First and foremost is by phone, which is the most utilized form of refilling medication. There are different ways to do it over the phone, with audio care being the most popular refill option as it's an automated line that a majority of the sites have contracts with.

There are also local call centers and contract health centers for sites that don't have the staff to do a call center. There's a new application coming out, Veterans Center for Call Modernization (VCCM), which is going to be available for local call centers to use and help them, not only



document calls, but also perform refill requests for patients. And then, of course, there's local VA calls that go straight to VA.

Of course, you can go to a pharmacy in person to get a refill or go to the clinic and get your refill request from the clinic itself. You can mail in labels that you get printed off, handed to you or mailed to you with each refill. Additionally, you can refill medication outside VA. VA does not have that information captured, but we still have to understand that that is a method for refilling prescriptions.

The one we're talking about today, of course, is online. My HealthVet is the forefront for that with refill requests. You can also send a Secure Message, but we prefer patients to use the refill methods online. The way in which online refill requests are currently being done all converge through My HealthVet. That essentially means that any online request is using an API, an external application, for any refill request. Both Vets.gov and this application are limited to what they can see and do based on My HealthVet functions and viewing capabilities.

I'm going to give you a glance at the homepage from the application itself. It has the four main features, and I wanted to show you how it's similar to My HealthVet. There are no enhanced features because, again, this is data being pulled from My HealthVet not directly from VistA, so we were limited based on those capabilities. On My HealthVet you cannot renew a prescription, so this app does not allow you to request a renewal, only refills. You still complete renewals through Secure Messaging or through audio care. You can refill and track medications, and you can view your prescription history. We also provide links to go to My HealthVet in case they're not seeing a medication that is on there.

There's a few things I want to point out on the app as well. There is an 'About' button and a 'Help' section, which are what we call nonfunctional acquirement features for mobile applications, that are very similar for each one. Additionally, there's a 'Help Guest' section, which tells you what sort of browsers are supported and gives you a way to provide feedback, user guides, manuals, a quick start guide and things like that.

As far as what's needed to support this app, it's currently available for Android and Windows operating systems. In the next phase of testing we'll be using an iOS version.

I'm going to start walking through each of these features and I'll try to capture each and every click as you walk through and navigate the app.

The first one is, Refillable VA Medications. One thing to be aware of, this is not just medications, this is also supplies as well. So, in addition to medications, you also see test strips, syringes, scrubs, things that we're dispensing that aren't technically in medication, but they are prescription. Requesting a refill is simple from here. We have different steps to help validate that the selection is correct before it's actually submitted, and we'll walk you through those.



What I want to show you first though, is when you enter into any of these four main features of the application, it may not be all your medication information. We wanted to bring this up to the user because many users, as we've discussed the kitchen table view, they may not see some of the medications that they've been taking. This is usually just because the application has specific logic that restricts the view of certain statuses where certain medications or certain, you know, things that aren't shown, we don't want them to take that view and assume that anything they don't see they shouldn't be taking.

We want to inform Veterans that the medications they're taking is a discussion for them to have with their provider regardless of whether they see the medication or not, because if they don't see a medication, they need to talk to their provider. After you say, "Okay," it enters the homepage of the feature itself, which is the page where you can refill VA medication.

Each feature will tell the user how many entries are available. In this case, it would be for the number of refillable VA medications. Now, when we talk about refillable VA medications, this is limited to the logic My HealthVet uses. One of those restrictions is on controlled substances, such as methadone, morphine and Oxycodone. If there's a schedule to your narcotic, you cannot refill those medications per regulations. They have no refills. You have to get a new prescription every month, so those medications will not be shown on here.

Other medications that aren't shown on My HealthVet are ones that have never been released. Until a prescription is released in VistA, it will not show in My HealthVet. It may be an active prescription, they may have refills available, but until it's released, it's not going to be viewable on My HealthVet or on Rx Refill.

So that's just a little bit about what a refillable medication is. Short term medications won't show up here because the prescription may be expired or discontinued.

One of the screen features you'll notice is that you can scroll down to view more prescriptions and information. It's just one of the screen features for the mobile apps.

You also see that there's a "Sort" feature. The "Default Sort" is different for each feature itself. In one sort, refillable medications are based on the medication name itself, alphabetically. You can change the "Default Sort" by medication name, by facility or by the last fill date, newest to oldest or vice versa. And, when you have a long list of medications that are refillable, this would really come in handy.

You can also select the "See Details" function. When you're ready to refill the medication, you will select the "Detailed View" to look at more information prior to submitting a refill. There's the status of a medication, prescription number, the facility that this comes from as well as the last fill date.

By hitting the "See Details" button, you will then see more information than you did before. It also shows on this view the refills remaining, the last time it was filled and the last time it was



shipped, since the ship date might not always be the fill date if there's a suspended order. It also shows the current expiration date of the medication which helps you determine if you should request a refill before it expires.

This is where you take the action to refill the medication by selecting "Request Refill." Once you do that, you'll get a confirmation pop up that relists the drug name as well as the prescription number to make sure you selected the correct prescription. Because there are changes where the same drug has different prescription numbers, you can confirm here.

If it was successful, it'll go to the "OK page," you'll select "OK," and it will reduce the number of prescriptions that are available for refill. You will no longer see the prescription that you just submitted because now it's no longer refillable and is in a submitted status. It actually goes to the "Prescription History" page because it is now part of the history of your request versus something you can take action on at this moment.

Now here's sort of an unhappy path. This is in case you hit "Submit" and the refill is not successfully submitted, which can happen. Once you select "OK" here, instead of taking these back to the main page, it also shows a problem occurred and tells you exactly why the prescription refill that was submitted didn't go through. You can then contact your healthcare team to let them know you've tried to submit a refill and you're having issues.

Before we continue, if there are any questions, we can start answering questions that we already have in the chat box.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Thanks for that Dr. Spahn. We do have lots of conversation going on in the chat. A lot of people have questions about My HealthVet, so we can start there.

How would you say this app is different from My HealthVet? And, can you talk a little bit about the differences between the app sign on and My HealthVet?

**ERIC SPAHN:** Sure.

The difference with the sign on is that you have to have a DS Logon. So even if you're a, My HealthVet user, you still need a DS Logon in order to use the Rx Refill App. The only difference between My HealthVet and this is the DS Logon itself.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay, great. Is there shipping time expectation using this app the same as with My HealthVet – 7 to 10 days?

**ERIC SPAHN:** Correct. That's actually a VA pharmacy expectation. A majority of our medications are sent through mail order pharmacy, and we expect 7 to 10 days to ship them. We usually beat that, but that's sort of our under-promise, over-deliver range.



**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay, great. Thank you for that. What's the plan for when this will be released to the public, or a national launch?

**ERIC SPAHN:** The planned release is fall of this year. What we've been doing for the last three weeks is we had 16 different field testers that are VA patients, pharmacy staff and coordinators that are familiar with the way My HealthVet works. We've done some unique testing in which we gave them a side by side view to see the data exchange between My HealthVet and mobile app. We're waiting for all their test scripts to come back.

Once we get all that information back to us from the contracted team, we'll be able to make decisions on if there's any bugs we need to fix or anything that the users didn't really understand we need to maybe address. Then that needs to go into our education with our user manual, or we may actually need to make the changes and possibly delay the release. But, as long as the bugs are not significant, then we'll continue with the release for this fall.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay, great. Will this have Secure Messaging incorporated at some point?

**ERIC SPAHN:** Well, Secure Messaging is out there. I know, at one point in time, there was a Secure Messaging app in development, or maybe gathering requirements. I really don't know the stage in which it is.

If you try to make an app that does everything you're going to keep delaying it with testing and bug fixes and such like that. So that's still something that's only on My HealthVet .

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay. Do Veterans have to refill one prescription at a time, or is there a way to refill multiple prescriptions without extra steps?

**ERIC SPAHN:** It is one at a time with this app in this feature. I know on My HealthVet you can see multiple refillable scripts and hit a bunch of check boxes and then hit submit. We wanted to show more information prior to the request and, because it is more user friendly with it being a responsive sight where you can use your smart phone and scroll with your phone, it should work more efficiently. It is one by one at this time with the way the functionality works.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Thank you. Where does the "Help Desk" link take the Veteran? Is it to a phone number or email contact form?

**ERIC SPAHN:** I believe it's both. There's both an email and a phone number listed on that in the "Help Desk" feature, so you can choose to call or send an email in order to get help with the app if you're having issues with it.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay. Thank you. Is there information on the site about why certain medications may not be refillable, such as if they're Schedule II?





**ERIC SPAHN:** That's listed in the user manual and again, that's restricted to what My HealthVet is doing. I believe My HealthVet shows that as well, that you cannot refill a Controlled II Substance. Now, just because they don't appear in the refillable medication list doesn't mean they won't appear in your "Prescription History" list. If you don't see it on the refillable list, maybe it's just either expired, discontinued status, or maybe there are no refills even though it's still active. That means it'll fall in the "Prescription History" page, so that's where you would go to retrieve that.

We are working directly with My HealthVet on future prototypes to pull more information in, and one of those would be a Controlled II Substances so that we need Veterans to be able to see those.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay, we're going to go ahead and move back into the presentation, but please remember that we'll be answering additional questions at the end. If you have additional questions, go ahead and put them in the chat.

So, Dr. Spahn, we'll turn it back over to you. Thanks.

**ERIC SPAHN:** I appreciate all your questions and feedback. For questions that we can't get to on the call, we can answer through email.

One of the things that's unique to the Rx Refill App is its responsive design, meaning that when you open it on your iPad or iPhone, the screen shrinks and reformats so that you can see all of the features. No matter where you are on the app, you can navigate through the features.

The next section we're going to go over is the "Track Delivery" section. The app can only track prescriptions delivered from our VA-known pharmacies. It cannot track prescriptions from a local VA Medical Center, because that tracking information and the carrier tracking numbers are not available in a database. About 80% to 90% of our prescriptions are mailed from the Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP), so a majority are being tracked.

The first time you enter "Refillable Medication," you'll still see this "Important Information" notice reiterating that the list of medications you see here is not necessarily all of your medications. You need to take the ones you and your doctor have discussed.

The data it shows is the last 45 days of shipments, just like My HealthVet, so it'll only show those prescriptions. Some people have asked if it's possible to remove medications once they've been delivered, but many patients like to have that information there just in case it wasn't actually delivered. So, it will stay up if it's been shipped out in the last 45 days.

You can sort based on medication and facility in case you're a Veteran that used different facilities, both local and remote. On the main page, you'll see the drug name and strength, the prescription status, the prescription number and the facility.



This has a unique box that pops up before you get to the detail view that has an additional step that tells you what I just told you about it being the last 45 days. This reminds the user that this is the date range in which they can see trackable medications. The user could check the box and never see this notice again as long as you use the app, so that's an option to get rid of that alert.

This is the detailed view of "Track Delivery," which is exactly like My HealthVet. It has the same information as far as the prescription information with the name of the drug, the image, the prescription number, the facility and the phone number of the pharmacy. The tracking information including the delivery service, the carrier, the tracking number and if there's any additional prescriptions in the package, because packages coming from CMOP, most of time have more than one medication, especially with patients on many medications. They want to bundle those to save on shipping. They'll also tell you what other prescriptions are in the package, so you may have additional prescriptions in there.

When you click on "View Image" like you can do on My HealthVet, you can select the image. Once you select the image, it keeps the detailed view in the background, but puts up the image of the medication. It will show you information such as the print name of the medication, the shape, the color, the front imprint, the back imprint, the package and the package type.

There's also a disclaimer up there. We worked with the medication library to put into the disclaimer that tells the patient, even though you may see this, this is not the dose you're taking. We don't want patients to see these two capsules here and assume they're supposed to be taking two and really their dose is one or three. This was done in testing to make sure that the image they see is the same as what they had in their hand, and it's really important that we tested that, and, so far, we've had good testing results.

Whenever you click on the tracking number, it'll give you a pop up and let you know you're leaving the app to go to an external site of whichever mail carrier VA is using at the time, and that will open in a new window.

Now we're going into the "Prescription History" button. Again, just like My HealthVet, there is more detailed information here. You are going to see a longer list of meds here, because it's not just the medications available for refill, it's the medication history. If you want your most recent medications at the top, you can change the order by sorting based on medication name, facility and the medication status: either active, discontinued or expired.

There is another detail view through this page where you can view quantity, refill status, prescription number, facility, refills remaining, last refill date, last ship date and the expiration date. So that gives you a little bit more information to see from the previous screen. Again, all that is the same as My HealthVet, as far as which data fields are being shown.



One of the things we changed with this application is the status of holds. We were able to put prescriptions on hold. When we were working on something with medication, we changed the status to "on hold."

If users want to see more medication information, they can just click on "Medication Information" on My HealthVet. It takes you to additional information, and you'll see that pop up that you saw again. This one has a disclaimer that this is an app for medication refills. It's not a complete list of your meds. This page has all the different links on My HealthVet where medication information is stored. There's a complete medication list, there's Blue Button and health summaries. You can go to My HealthVet for FAQs about medication information, or even go to the medical library. Some of these links are also on the Ask a Pharmacist App, but we added them to this as well.

One of the things too, if you take the "Medication Information" screen and view it on a phone, it goes to that responsive design again to where you have the hamburger menu at the top, and all of the descriptions are now under an "Info" button you can click. Veterans on many surveys say they like this functionality, because they want to know a little bit about what's under the link before they actually click it because it's going to send them to My HealthVet. And, if they leave the description, and they don't want to go there, it saves them from having to click and go to My HealthVet then come back to the app.

The iOS version of the Rx Refill App will be an app that lives on the home screen of your mobile device, where you can just click on it and open your application from there. That's going to go through testing in its own round after that's been finished in development. Both the HTML and iOS versions still plan to come out this fall, so that you have the desktop version as well as this very mobile friendly accessible version.

And that's it for today. You'll see a user manual, quick start guides, slide shows and FAQs on the app page on the VA App Store. It really helps with communicating the app to not only to the field, but also the field to different sites and promoting the use of the app.

It looks like we have a little bit of time for some questions.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Great. Thank you so much for that, Dr. Spahn.

We do have some more questions coming through, so I will get into those. The first one I have is: will the app show co-pays?

**ERIC SPAHN:** The app does not show co-pays. This app began gathering requirements a couple years ago, before many of the user-specific changes were made. Especially regarding co-pays, which become even more important with the new tier system, so that's not a requirement we had in developing this.





If we ever get into a hands-free app, there are a lot of options for us to examine, especially as the app is used more and more. I think that's something important for everyone to understand is that if you want an application like this to be enhanced, supporting its use only improves the chances of that happening. If it's not what you want, and you discourage the use of the application, it's unlikely we'll ever get funding to be enhanced. So hopefully that's something we can revisit in future versions.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay, great. Do the images of the medication change in the app as the manufacturer changes? Will those be updated?

**ERIC SPAHN:** Yes. Just like My HealthVet, that was a factor we considered when developing the Rx Refill App. Those images are with each and every fill. The national drug code identifier is dispensed with that specific fill, which identifies which medication was dispensed, will identify the image to show from the medication image library.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay, great. Is there a link to My HealthVet or Secure Messaging or a phone number if a Veteran has questions about a specific prescription?

**ERIC SPAHN:** We don't have that on the app itself. In the user manual for the Rx Refill App, it does mention that if you have questions or concerns, you can access the Ask a Pharmacist App, which redirects users to a Secure Messaging log in. We hope to, of course, get the actual Secure Messaging mobile feature eventually, but that gives them that path to find the answers they need. They could also access Secure Messaging from whatever device they're using or log into My HealthVet, but if they forget that that is an option, it does show them the Ask a Pharmacist App option.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay, great. Thank you. Does the app prompt patients to send a Secure Message to request renewal?

**ERIC SPAHN:** It does not. One of the concerns is that, for Secure Messaging and renewals, those alerts go into an email inbox, and providers are monitoring CPRS notifications and this would be an additional task to ask them to monitor email notifications. It's hard to get that message alerted to the provider. When it comes to online refills, regardless of My HealthVet or this mobile app, Secure Messaging is your only option.

There's no promotion of that yet though because, in order for that to work, the provider will have to log into Secure Messaging to get that message, and we want to try to make things consistent. Calling in the refill request for a renewal is probably the best option.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay. I have one more question here, which is: Why are we using the metric system for pill sizing?

**ERIC SPAHN:** The metric system for pill sizing. That would be a question for the FDA. It comes back to the foundation of the pharmacy just using the concentration, or the potency of a



medication gets down to weight. Even some drugs in micrograms. You have to find a scale that works for a wide range of dosing, so I assume that's why that was chosen. But, I don't know how to answer that other than if you had concern with that, you can contact the FDA.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Alright. Do you need both My HealthVet and a DS Logon to use the app?

**ERIC SPAHN:** Correct. At a minimum, you have to have a DS Logon. If you find out you don't have an advanced account with My HealthVet, that's an easy fix. If you have a premium or advanced My HealthVet account where you can renew prescriptions online, you still have to get the DS Logon to use the app. Until you get that, you won't be able to use this, and that's not just for this app – I think that's for mobile apps in general that are looking at patient data and retrieving that data, you have to have one.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay. How will we know how many prescriptions or refills using this method, or can the pharmacy count the number of refills done by site?

**ERIC SPAHN:** That's a good question. The data you see on this app and the data that you send back, all of it goes through My HealthVet, so there's nothing working directly with VistA with this application. So that means the only thing going into this square is My HealthVet.

If you notice that once this app is released, you start seeing more and more internet refills coming through, you can check the utilization, maybe remind your sites how to use this application because, again, it's an internet resale using My HealthVet as the data exchange, and it's going to just add more and more internet refills to your reports.

There's traceability on a program office level being able to trace how many of the refill requests came through. However, if you reach out to your local medical center and say, "Hey, can I get a report on how many of the internet refills that I'm seeing are coming from the mobile app versus My HealthVet," they won't be able to give you that data. It isn't a requirement to have that traceability. We just don't have the functionality, because that requires a change in VistA, not just the application.

**HANNAH WEBSTER:** Okay, great. Thanks so much for all of those answers, Dr. Spahn. And thanks everyone for all of your great questions and for participating in today's webinar. We will go through, make sure we didn't miss any questions and reach out if we did.

Dr. Spahn, thank you for all the great information. We'll go ahead and wrap up, but thanks again so much for joining us, and we hope to see you next time.

**ERIC SPAHN:** Thanks again for having me.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTION NOT ADDRESSED DURING WEBINAR:** Like other mobile apps will there be a video tutorial on [mobile.va.gov](http://mobile.va.gov)?



**ANSWER:** There are no plans currently to provide a video tutorial for RxRefill on the mobile.va.gov website. However, that is a great suggestion and something that will be considered to enhance the Veteran experience using the RxRefill mobile app and may be forthcoming. Please check back for further updates.



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