

VA Mobile Discussion Series App Store

DENISE KENNEDY: Hello, everyone. Welcome and thank you for attending our VA Mobile Health Discussion Series webinar. My name is Denise Kennedy, and I'm going to run through a few brief technical reminders before we begin this discussion about the VA App Store.

Your phone lines are muted. We'll be taking questions through the Chat feature. If you're experiencing any difficulty, please use the Chat function that is available to you at the right-hand side of your screen.

To respect everyone's schedules, we'll keep this moving so the session ends on time. Today, we welcome Sarah Moran, Karen Bell, Rob Hennessey, contractors and members of the Office of Connected Care Communications Team.

As I mentioned before, if you have any questions for our presenters, 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 this webinar with any relevant answers.

With that, I'm going to turn this over to our presenter. Sarah, over to you.

SARAH MORAN: OK. Thanks so much, Denise. As Denise mentioned, my name is Sarah Moran, and I'm going to be covering the first part of today's discussion series, focusing on the VA App Store. After I'm done, I'll turn it over to Karen Bell to talk to you about the Beta App Store, which is VA's new site for testing apps prior to their national release.

We'll then turn it over to Rob Hennessey to inform you about the Connected Care site, which is a one-stop shop portal to access information about VA's digital health technologies within the Office of Connected Care.

Before I dive into the VA App Store, let me first give you a bit of background on the site. As some of you may recall, up until fairly recently, there was a separate training portal and a separate VA App Store. Both of these sites launched in 2014. The App Store housed links and overview information for all the VA mobile apps.

While the training portal focused on training materials for use by Veterans and VA Care Team audiences for the apps that lived on the App Store. And over time, the content on the VA App Store and training portal evolved, and it made sense to combine the two sites to ensure that all app information was available to audiences easily and in one central location.

With this in mind, App Store 2.0 was created, and it launched in the spring of 2016. While I've talked a little bit about the history of the VA App Store, I'm going to elaborate on some of the new and exciting features that the App Store offers. We've included a list on this slide that you can read through, but I think it will make more sense to show you the features. So let's go ahead and move on, and I'll chat through these points over the next few slides.

This is the Home page of the VA App Store. And you can see some of the features that were listed on the previous slide. Let's start with the enhanced search functionality. The App Store is now equipped with enhanced search functionality, and there are multiple ways to navigate the App Store to find apps that meet your needs.

For example, you can filter apps by audience, by device type, and by category. To do so, you simply use the menus available on the left-hand navigation or the page itself. Users can also search with a built-in search feature. You simply type your search terms in the field and the results will appear.

Another feature that is new is the Update feature. This green box, which you can see at the top of the page, draws the user's attention to pressing issues that are affecting the VA App Store. This comes in handy when an app is down, and we need to notify users quickly or when there are important notices that need to get out to the public.

In addition to the enhanced search functionality and update feature, there is also a new Lock icon. Lock icons were added to distinguish at a quick glance if an app requires the user to authenticate with credentials prior to accessing the app. As you may know, VA develops a variety of apps that access the EHR, so many of the apps require a DS logon or Vista credentials. There are also informational apps that do not require credentials and do not have Lock icons.

I'm now going to move forward and talk a bit about one of the biggest changes to the VA App Store, the integration of the Training Portal. As I mentioned at the top of the meeting, up until recently, there was a VA App Store and a Training Portal in existence. To create a more user friendly and seamless experience, VA decided to combine the two sites to create a new and improved App Store. The integration of the Training Portal greatly improved the user interface as the App Store is now a one-stop shop to find all of the resources needed to use the apps.

Some of these resources include a rating system, which you can see with the stars at the top, a Launch button, a feedback mechanism, and training materials. These resources make it easy for a user to access and figure out how to use VA's apps but also to let VA know about the experience a user is having with the technology.

I now want to talk a bit about the training materials. Similar to the Training Portal, the VA App Store now houses a suite of educational materials for each app. Each app is equipped with a User Manual, a Quick Start Guide, FAQs, and a slideshow. Now I'm going to hop back to the previous slide to show you where you can access these materials. It's easy to access the training materials from the VA App Store now.

Each app has its own page on the App Store, and here you can see we're using an example of the Ask a Pharmacist app page. You can find the Quick Start Guide, the User Manual, FAQs, and the slideshow by tapping on those sections within the page.

I'm now going to spend some time talking through each of these four materials, starting with the User Manual. The User Manual is the most comprehensive training material that the VA Mobile

Team creates. User Manuals consist of step-by-step instructions for using an app. Manuals detail all components of an app from logging in to explaining all the functionality in a user-friendly step-by-step manner.

The Quick Start Guide provides a higher-level overview than what you would find in the User Manual. It enables the user to, just like its name implies, get started quickly to use an app.

The slideshow training material, it's very visual in nature. Slideshows consist of images and brief descriptions of key features of an app. And in many cases we think about the slide show as a way to get users excited about what these apps can do and as a Veteran or a care team member begins to use the app, they turn to the user manual and the Quick Start Guide when they need to figure out how to use the technology.

Last but not least is the FAQ training material, and our frequently asked questions are meant to provide more just in time information that a user can refer to as needed when questions or issues pop up.

Now that we've covered the four training materials, I'm going to spend a little time talking about the training material development process. At the highest level, there are five steps to developing a suite of training materials. Our team, the VA Mobile Team, starts by gathering information about the app. This could be a concept paper, scripts, design requirements, you name it. We want to get a base-level understanding of the app, and we also want to obtain access to the app.

Typically we access apps in the [INAUDIBLE] or dev-test environments. Getting access to the apps is critical to our workout. To be able to thoroughly explain the step-by-step functionality, as we do in the user manual, we need to be able to experience the app first-hand.

Also we strive to use the version of the app that will go to field test. We have found it's not efficient to work on apps that are in development as that affects the ability of us to finalize the content.

After we have collected background details and have access to an app, we begin drafting the content. We start with the User Manual, as that is the most in depth and comprehensive document.

We then draft the Quick Start Guide, FAQs and slide show as well. And once all materials are drafted, we submit the content to the VA subject matter experts to review and provide feedback. We then revise based on the input. And once the VA subject matter experts sign off on the content, we proceed to design.

All of our training materials follow the VA mobile brand, and they're made 508 compliant and are uploaded to the VA App Store. All in all, this process usually takes about two months. Now that we've covered the four training materials and the development process, I'm going to circle back to a topic that we touched on a little earlier this afternoon, the ability to provide feedback about VA's apps.

Each page on the App Store, each apps page on the VA App Store is equipped with a feedback tab. The feedback form is really easy to use. As you can see here, there are a handful of options on a Likert scale to select from. Also at the bottom of each page, which I know you can't really see here, there's a free form field to enter additional comments. The VA uses this feedback to consider possible improvements to VA apps that can be made in the future. All feedback is anonymous and it's collected for analysis purposes only.

Now that we've talked through the new features of the site and the training materials, let's talk a little bit about where the VA App Store is going. In the coming months, the VA Mobile Team will continue to refine the site. We'll work to make regular content updates and audit the site to ensure that the content is accurate and fresh. Also, more features will be added to continue to improve the end user experience.

The team will also work to continuously align branding and messaging with other connected care technologies such as the Beta App Store, which we'll dive into next.

Before I hand it over to Karen to speak with you about the beta testing site, let me return it back to Denise.

DENISE KENNEDY: Thanks, Sarah. Right now there are no questions. Just a reminder to everyone, if you have any questions about the app store, please use the checkbox in the middle right-hand of your screen, and we can go back in and touch on them at the end of the presentation. Karen, I'll turn it over to you.

KAREN BELL: Great. Thanks, Denise. All right. So for now I'll go ahead and segue into the Beta App Store. Again, my name is Karen Bell. And as Sarah just mentioned, there are a number of apps that have been developed. And during that process, it was discovered that there needed to be a way for VA to have users test the apps and provide feedback.

We can build out apps and test things 100 times, but in order for an app to really be successful, it needs to make sense to the end user. There needed to be a way for us to get user feedback on the apps so the Beta App Store was created. The Beta App Store offers a way for Veterans and health care professionals to test the usability of VA-developed apps and provide feedback on the apps prior to national release.

The site's just been live for about two months, so we're still in the early stages of tracking feedback and results. But thus far we've had approximately 250 people sign up to test the apps, and so far we've had some pretty good positive feedback. So for those who sign up, you really get a sneak peek at the apps before they're launched to a wider audience. So it's a cool opportunity to get a glimpse first-hand of some of the apps that are in the pipeline.

So if you're interested in testing the apps, I encourage you to click on the link that you see there on the slide in front of you, and take a look and sign up to be a tester.

So to give you an idea of how this testing process works, what I'll do now is go ahead and walk through how a user looking to test the apps would sign up through the site. So once you click on

that link, you'll be taken to the App Store Home page-- the Beta App Store Home page-- where there will be some information up top about the Beta App Store and then a submission form, which you see on the slide towards the bottom for signing up to test the apps.

A few things to note about the form, so right now, we're currently only accepting VA employees with a valid va.gov email address to test the apps. So right now this is just for internal testing only.

The submission form, as you can see, is pretty straightforward. You'll need to give your name, VA email address, whether you might be a VA employed Veteran or health care professional and what types of devices that you use. And even though we're asking for your name and email, it's mainly for vetting purposes and ensuring we're assigning the apps to the right people. So for example, a Veteran app is sent to Veterans, et cetera. And all feedback submitted is anonymous. It's not attached to any names.

Once the form is complete, there's a Submit button that you can touch at the bottom. The page will then refresh with a message thanking you for submitting and letting you know that the form went through.

So when that's done, you'll then receive an email that the VA email address you provided in the form with information to test the apps. It will include information on which apps are available for testing, a brief description of the app and its features, along with a button at the bottom to click on, which will then take you to the apps testing page.

Now, as I mentioned with the form, there are several different types of apps that will be available for testing. So ones that are geared towards Veterans such as the Ask a Pharmacist app that you can see in the email here, and ones that are made for health care professionals. And based on the boxes that you check on the submission form, you'll receive apps geared towards you for testing.

So when you're ready to test, tap on the Test the App button in that email. This will then take you to the app testing page, which is almost identical to the app page you'll see on the VA App Store for currently available apps. It will have a description for the app, a tab for the training materials and FAQs Sarah was just discussing, along with a tab for Feedback.

When you're ready to test, tap on the blue Launch the App button. So you can see that right there underneath the app's title, and this will launch the app for you. A quick note, VA apps are web based and built to work on any mobile device. So that means that there is no download required.

Some of the apps may require a DS logon. These are the apps that connect to VA's electronic health record. So for example, Mobile Blue Button and Summary of Care. And if the app available sent to you requires a DS logon, it will be noted in the email sent to you. And it will also have a notification on the app testing page, which you can see on the slide in front of you. It's noted at the bottom there.

And once you've launched that, we encourage you to look around, explore the app, and use it as you would normally. Walk through the entire app, make note of any issues in the experience, as

well as your overall experience in using the app. So we welcome and appreciate any feedback you might have. It really does help.

It's an invaluable part of the process to get that sort of feedback. We really want to know what the user experience is like and what you think as you're walking through it. And also as another note too, you might receive a reminder email reminding you to test the app and provide feedback if you haven't submitted feedback within a week of receiving that initial notification email.

So once you're done testing the app and exploring it a bit more, return back to the apps testing page, and you can get to that by tapping on the Test the App button from your original email.

As we mentioned earlier and as you'll see on the screen here, there are tabs located underneath the app's heading for training materials. Those are the materials that Sarah had walked through earlier. As you'll see here, there's also a tab labeled Feedback to VA. And that's the tab that you want to visit when you're ready to provide feedback on the app.

So fill out the feedback form. You'll see that there. Just add in some details about your experience using the app, any additional thoughts, what you liked, didn't like. And when you're finished, just tap the blue Submit button at the bottom of the form. At that point, you'll receive a thank you email thanking you for submitting your feedback.

And that's the process for testing the apps. It's pretty straightforward. We tried to keep it quick and easy for anyone who volunteers to test the apps. And, again, the feedback really is invaluable in the development process. It helps us make the apps the best apps possible for our Veterans.

Now, in terms of next steps for the future, we look forward to adding more and more apps to the site as they become available, because we continue to develop additional apps. And so the site is fairly new. We're also continuing to revise things as needed to make sure the testing process is smooth and intuitive to make testing these apps as easy as possible for anyone who volunteers to be a tester. And that's the Beta App Store in a nutshell. We really do encourage you to sign up, would love to hear your feedback and what you think of the apps. So I guess we'll pause for questions.

DENISE KENNEDY: Yes, we do have several questions coming in, but I think at this point, it makes sense to turn it over to Rob and then we'll circle back and get to as many questions here as we can. But we're still compiling and finding some answers on some of the ones that we don't have direct answers to. So we will get to your questions here at the end but, in the meantime, let's turn it over to Rob.

ROB HENNESSEY: Hey. Good afternoon. I'm Rob Hennessey. I'll be walking you through the new Connected Care website today. This is a brand-new website. As some of you may know, it just launched to the public last month. So we're excited to add it to the Connected Care's growing online presence.

The site was created to serve as a portal for both Veterans and health care audiences to learn more about the VH Virtual Care technologies all in one spot. After looking here at this slide, you

can see our Homepage. It was designed to provide audiences with quick access to the technical solutions that are available. We divided it into these two main audience segments.

You can see here we have solutions for Veterans, solutions for health care professionals. We wanted the content to be solution focused, obviously, to clearly show the value of Connected Care's offerings up front. And we also designed it with engaging images.

We wanted to draw people's attention and have clear calls to action across the site so that people could quickly get to the information and services they're looking for. In short, we just want the visitor's experience at the site to be fast, flow to the logical next step. And we set up the page to give visitors multiple options to navigate through the site.

You can see up here at the top at the top nav, the audiences can quickly go to solutions here or in this location. When they click there, all of the technical solutions are available in one spot connected by tabs. So each of the audiences finds this landing page, and it displays the technology being promoted. On each of the tabs, there is basic overview content for each of the offerings. We also sprinkled in some real-life images and anecdotes of people, Veterans, and care team members to illustrate the benefits.

I think visitors like seeing participants and being able to relate to their stories within the offering descriptions. Of course, within each offering description, we do have anecdotes. We've got videos, we've got images. There are links for more detail or people can click directly to the program offices.

These pages are pretty evergreen. So the content is good, and it explains the information quickly. But as a call to action for everybody on the call and obviously Connected Care, we invite you to submit your information. If you have videos, if you have stories to tell, we can help promote them here. And I'll show you a little bit more about where we do that on the site.

So we mentioned that we wanted to get users to the solutions quickly. But the site isn't just a portal. We wanted to direct people to the program off the sites quickly. We don't want to deter anyone from going to a site they might be looking for specifically or by name. So that's also an option at the top and throughout the site, you can see here.

And as you click through, all of the sites are still available with their own unique look and feel. We are going to take a look at branding, but all the sites are still here. They're not going away. We've got Telehealth, Mobile, My HealthVet, and Innovation, all with their own unique presence and quickly accessible with one click from the Connected Care site.

So this is our What's New page, pretty self-explanatory, with section of sites to get dedicated to any kind of news items, exclusive video content. We have announcements about new offerings there, links to all kinds of relevant stories from across the industry and outside, but always within the virtual health care umbrella. If you haven't already, you should definitely stop by.

There's some great video content on there that explains the office of Connected Care through a handful of vignettes. Great viewpoints of Veterans and their health care providers, and shows

just kind of the work in action. We're definitely going to have a few more videos up there within the next month. So it's going to be a great page to make in your favorites and to come back and visit to see some of that new, exclusive content.

And, again, this page is set up to share information. So even if you have it in your own program office, we can help amplify your message. By sending us your information, your stories, we can write the article. If you have something already written, we can link to it. This is a great spot for getting the word out, and we're going to increase that attention with outreach and social media campaigns as well.

Just playing more of the same. We can show you more throughout or you can click on your own and check out the Connected Care site page by page, but there's also staff profiles. We've got a form for you to contact staff and ask questions, either about the site or about any of the offerings. There's a sign up for e-news and more information.

We installed a powerful new search engine, which is pretty great. If you can't find what you're looking for in the basic navigation, you can always use this new search tool, which worked well across the VA but in particular is focused on the Connected Care audience.

And then the site is mobile responsive. You can see here, you're going to get the same look and feel in a mobile device. You're not going to lose any of your audience share through an outdated web platform.

So that wraps up the super quick tour. We certainly hope you check out the site and also come back as we add new content, especially some of those new videos that are coming your way. We'll let you know when that happens.

And we mentioned previously that we'd love your info and ideas and stories and images and videos. Please do send them our way. We're going to put some information there in the chat room about how you can connect with us but, in short, it's the vha10p8communications@va.gov email. And, again, we'll link that in the chat box, but we'd love to hear from you and help expand the site. Thank you.

DENISE KENNEDY: Excellent. Thanks, Rob. I want to stay with you for a question. I'll work my way back here. We do have a question. Someone wants to know if Connected Care uses GovDelivery.

ROB HENNESSEY: Actually we do not at the moment, but we are using GovDelivery with the Beta App Store, and we're working on an integration there that will use some pretty innovative GovDelivery technology. And once that's available, we'll certainly let everyone know about it, but right now it's not being used on a Connected Care site.

DENISE KENNEDY: Great. Thanks. And I want to go to an earlier question. Actually, it's a two-part question. The first, I think, Sarah maybe answered it. If a patient doesn't have DS logon, how will they know to get one?

SARAH MORAN: Sure. There is a DS logon page that is accessible from the mobile.va.gov site, and I'll go ahead and plug that URL into the chat window. Great. It's there now. Please check that out.

DENISE KENNEDY: Excellent. And there is a question here also to what happened to the Mobile Blue Button in Summary of Care apps. Do you want to take that one also, Sarah?

SARAH MORAN: Sure, happy to. The Mobile Blue Button and Summary of Care are both available on the Beta Testing site, so I think the URL we shared earlier for where go to go to sign up for that site, and if you do so, you can be put into the pool to test those apps.

DENISE KENNEDY: Excellent. Thank for that. And I'm not sure which one of you want to answer this one. So we have a question, are there brochures for Connected Care that we can order through [INAUDIBLE]?

KAREN BELL: Sure. This is Karen. I can jump into that. So right now, we don't currently have brochures for Connected Care, but that is the works. We should have something in the next couple months. So that is something that we're looking to pull together. But at this time, we don't have a place for that at this time.

DENISE KENNEDY: Excellent. And I'm not sure. Do we have Alan on the phone? Alan, are you able to respond? OK. I'm going to answer for him on the question about will there be people at each VA medical center to help Veterans with apps. Alan says our goal is to have many people at the VAs who are VA Mobile ambassadors, including care team members, My HealtheVet coordinators, et cetera.

So I know Alan can jump in on the chat if he has more to add to that, but I did want to make that we got a verbal answer to that. I see there are a couple of people still typing here. So I wanted to ask will the Beta App Store be expanded to Veterans outside the VA? I know that that's a question that you receive quite frequently.

KAREN BELL: Yes, at this point, I think as I mentioned, the site's still fairly new. Right now, we're just keeping it internal testing only. It is open for consideration. It's something that we've talked about, possibly expanding it at a later point, but for now we're just keeping it within VA employees.

DENISE KENNEDY: Excellent. Thank you for that. And we have a question here, is there a link available on the main VA website so that the Connected Care site can be accessed?

ROB HENNESSEY: Not at this time, but we are working on some link sharing so we can make sure to raise the profile of the site in the very near future.

DENISE KENNEDY: Great. Thank you for that. And I think this one is for you, Sarah. A user says, I have a Veteran who has computer access. Can that Veteran be a beta tester?

SARAH MORAN: As long as they have computer access, and they can go to the UR--

DENISE KENNEDY: I think it's a Veteran, not necessarily a VA employee.

KAREN BELL: Oh, yeah. And I can jump in too for that. But the Beta App Store, that's what he's referring to there. So if the Veteran is a VA employee with a valid va.gov email address, that's what's needed in the vetting process. So they need to have a va.gov email address and be a VA-employed Veteran. And I know from that question, it doesn't specifically state whether that's a VA employee, but for now that's who we're currently testing.

DENISE KENNEDY: Excellent. Thank you so much. It looks like there are still some questions being typed into the store. So why don't we stick with that. What apps are currently available for testing? I know we talked we talked a little bit about two, but maybe you can expand on that.

KAREN BELL: Yeah, sure. So I think as Sarah alluded to, we do have Mobile Blue Button, Summary of Care, VA Launch Pad, and Ask a Pharmacist. So right now we currently have those four apps that are available for testing. But, as you mentioned, there are more apps coming through the pipeline every day, and we'll be updating that over the next couple months and more apps will become available for testing.

DENISE KENNEDY: Excellent. Excellent. And I think it's worth reminding people, Rob, how can people contribute to the Connected Care site?

ROB HENNESSEY: Yes. We'd like people to submit their information, whether it's questions or if they have actual story ideas or an actual story that we can link to. We want them to connect through the vha10P8communications@va.gov email address. Again, that's vha10P8communications@va.gov.

Excellent. Thank you. I know there are a couple of questions that sound like they're pretty specific so we are capturing your information here, and we'll have someone from this team reach out to you with some of those more specific questions. And [INAUDIBLE] just posted that link-- that email address that Rob was talking about.

I'm not sure if we have an answer to this on this side. There was a question, were the pharmacists taught the Ask a Pharmacist app, and are they educating patients?

SARAH MORAN: Not specifically, although I will say we do obviously have training materials available for the app that can be accessed by care teams, by coordinators, by Veterans, and those are available on the VA App Store. Again, putting the link into the chat window.

DENISE KENNEDY: Excellent. And we can circle back with you on that question and try to get a more specific answer for you as we don't always see some of the work as closely with some of the more specific project teams who might be carrying out some of that more individualized training.

All right. Lots of good questions here. I don't see anyone typing another question. So I think it makes sense to wrap this up here. If there are any questions that we didn't get to, please feel free to email the Communications teams at that VA email address that's in your link.

And also we want to thank you for participating in the webinar today. On the screen, you'll see a link for feedback below. Please tell us how we're doing and if there any other topics you would like to cover.

But also please note that if you have a specific question, the best way to do it is to email us, as the feedback link does not allow us to see who provided that feedback. So we are unable to answer specific questions as it is anonymous. And with that, we'll let you get back to your Friday. I hope everyone has a great and safe weekend, and signing off from here. Thank you all so much.