PMHC PILOT MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN

IT IS TIME TO ADDRESS THE MENTAL HEALTH EPIDEMIC IN AMERICAN AVIATION

The Pilot Mental Health Campaign (PMHC) is a bipartisan, grassroots organization working to modernize mental health policies in the aviation industry. We are a coalition of aviators, healthcare professionals, policy experts, and the loved ones of pilots who were failed by the current system.

THE PROBLEM

- Strict and arbitrary disclosure policies for talk therapy and other basic preventative and supportive psychological care.
- An extremely arbitrary and limited roster of medications approved for use by pilots, preventing the pilot from using the medication recommended by their physician.
- Out of 500,000+ pilots, only 522 use the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) restrictive anti-depressant protocol.
- The FAA review process of medical certificate applications often grounds pilots for 6 months to multiple years, even for simple, low-risk conditions.
- Pilots are often forced to bear personal financial responsibilities of more than $10,000 to navigate the system.
- FAA aeromedical procedures and systems are plagued by a lack of transparency, consistency, and communication with pilots.

These policies create a culture of silence and fear in American aviation, and more than half of all pilots exhibit at least one form of healthcare avoidance. Pilots operating in this broken system:

- Forego critical treatment options that have been proven to improve mental health
- Severely underreport depression and other mental health issues
- Are more likely to self-medicate with alcohol and/or illicit drugs
- Are more likely to self-medicate with prescription drugs outside physician supervision
- Are more likely to seek unaccredited or "underground" therapy

THE SOLUTIONS

- **Mental Health in Aviation Act (H.R.9687):** This legislation will require the FAA to implement the recommendations of the Mental Health and Aviation Medical Clearances Rulemaking Committee within two years. These recommendations include lowering barriers to mental health care for pilots and air traffic controllers. The committee also recommends creating a pathway for aviators and air traffic controllers to disclose previously unreported mental health diagnoses and treatment without the fear of professional repercussions. The bill will also require the FAA to annually review and update mental health-related processes and procedures to ensure that the FAA's mental health policies keep up with scientific and medical standards.

  The legislation will also allocate $13.74 million per year for three years to recruit, train, and hire more Aviation Medical Examiners (AMEs) to help clear the backlog of outstanding open medical applications at the FAA, and will allocate $1.5 million per year for three years to help destigmatize mental health care amongst aviators.

- **Aviation Medication Transparency Act of 2024 (H.R.9243):** This legislation will require the FAA to publish and regularly update a list of approved medications for aviators and air traffic controllers. Currently, the FAA provides Aviation Medical Examiners with specific guidance on medications that are safe for aviators and those that necessitate grounding for various periods. However, this crucial information is not made accessible to pilots, air traffic controllers, or non-aeromedical physicians.

  As a result, an aviator may unknowingly take prescription medications that could jeopardize their career. If both the aviator and their physician had access to information regarding approved medications, they could opt for similar medications that would not pose such risks.