

IPAAC 2024

Breaking Down Regulatory Barriers through Collaboration

FAA Aviation Mental Health & Medical Certification
Aviation Rulemaking Committee

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Chairman, AsMA Mental Health Working Group

FAA ARC Precursors

- 2015 Germanwings and FAA ARC, EASA report, BEA report
- DOT IG – FAA Pilot Mental Health Final Report - 12 July 2023
 - Comprehensive procedures to evaluate pilots' psychological health
 - FAA's ability to mitigate safety risks is limited by pilots' reluctance to disclose mental health conditions
 - Collaborate with airlines, airline pilot unions, and the aerospace medical community to assess ways to address barriers that discourage pilots from disclosing and seeking treatment for mental health conditions, based on the latest data and evidence; and
 - Develop and implement policy and protocol revisions recommended in the assessment.
- Horizon (Alaska) flight 2059 – “Magic Mushrooms” - 22 Oct 2023
 - Several other notable incidents DEN parking lot, DAL crew weapon, etc.
- NTSB Hearing – Navigating Mental Health in Aviation - 6 Dec 2023

ARC – Major Issues Addressed

- The FAA's handling of mental health diagnoses
- Current aeromedical mental health screening processes,
- Barriers preventing pilots/controllers from reporting mental health issues and seeking mental health care
- Education, training, and awareness of pilot/controller mental health issues. In-person ARC plenary meetings were held in Fort Worth, TX (Jan 9-11), McLean, VA (Feb

ARC Time Line

- Commissioned 4 December 2023
- Plenary meetings
 - Fort Worth, TX (Jan 9-11) McLean, VA (Feb 5-7) Seattle, WA (Mar 13-15)
- Two Work Groups
 - Operational / Peer Support & Medical
- Numerous Virtual meetings
- Broad representation of industry and aerospace medicine, Int'l
- Final Report with ***Unanimous Consensus*** 1 April 2024

FAA Mental Health Aviation Rulemaking Comm

BARRIERS (7)

- Culture
- Trust
- Fear
- Stigma
- Financial
- Process
- Knowledge & Information Gap

RECOMMENDATIONS (24)

- Psychotherapy Reporting
- Expand Peer Support Use
- Include MH in Aviation SMS
- MH Education for All Stakeholders
- Training & Testing for Ratings
- Risk Based Cert & Ops Limits
- IT
Infrastructure/Language/Documents

MESAFE

MEntal health for aviation SAFETY



Dr. Cristian PANAIT
IPAAC / 05.11.2024

Your safety is our mission.

MESAFE - Project Overview & Status



- The MESAFE research project financed by the European Commission and managed by EASA
- Identifying new mental health assessment tools suitable for use in aviation environment
 - Such tools would support aero-medical examiners (AMEs) to improve the mental health assessment of their applicants (pilots & ATCOs) and potentially avoid another accident such as Germanwings accident.
- Multilayer approach:
 - Prevention
 - Screening & detection of pathological conditions
 - Treatment
 - Return to duty



MESAFE project

#MESAFE will foster #safety in #aviation by proposing validated #MentalHealth assessment methods specific for the sector



MESAFE - background & objectives



- The MESAFE research project assesses **new medical developments** for the **prevention, early diagnosis** as well as **treatment** of **mental health conditions** which could pose a safety risk for aviation and would consequently lead to **pilot** and **ATCO** unfitness or the limitation of their medical certificate for safety purposes.
 - Identifying new medical diagnostic tools and treatments suitable for use in the aviation environment
 - Provide recommendation on implementation of these diagnostic tools and treatment measures
 - Overview of the potential impact
 - Provide training materials for AMEs and aviation personnel
- To allow the **update of the requirements and AMC/GM** according to the current **scientific evidence** in **mental health** in order to perform a better medical evaluation of pilots and ATCOs



MESAFE Conference - 23 and 24 April 2024

Key Points raised and Conclusion

- **Multi-layered Approach to Mental Health:** Given the absence of a one-size-fits-all screening system, participants emphasized the need for a multi-faceted approach. This would include medical prevention, comprehensive screening, and robust support programs.
- **Building Trust between AMEs and Applicants:** Trust and communication could be improved by clarifying regulatory processes, including the right to appeal decisions and pathways to regain medical certification. This transparency could encourage pilots to seek help without fear of losing their jobs.
- **Enhanced Training for AMEs and Medical Assessors:** Additional training is needed for AMEs in terms of promoting healthy lifestyles and providing preventive advice. Training should also focus on effective communication and assessing mental health across various aero-medical certification classes.
- **Resilience and Healthy Lifestyles for Pilots and ATCOs:** Participants stressed the need for additional training for pilots and ATCOs, emphasizing resilience, mental health prevention, and a healthy lifestyle.
- **Standardized Training for Support Providers:** The conference concluded with a call for harmonized training standards for those offering support to aviation personnel, ensuring a consistent and effective approach across the industry.
- **Stress Prevention and Working Conditions:** Attendees highlighted the importance of support programs in preventing stressors from accumulating to a level that might trigger mental health conditions. Recommendations from AMEs and feedback from these programs should be used to identify and address operational stressors within the Safety Management System (SMS) of each airline.

Next steps

Task	Timeline
Initial discussion with the Medical Experts' Group (MEG) about the project results and recommendations	16-17 May 2024
Internal assessment of the input received during the final dissemination event and MEG feedback	Q3 2024
Insert a placeholder for a potential EPAS action in EPAS 2025	Q3-Q4 2024
Potential rulemaking reviewing and updating the mental health requirements, AMC, and GM in Part-MED and Part-ATCO.MED taking into account the new scientific evidence of the MESAFE project	Q2 2025 – Q4 2027
Implementation support and safety promotion activities including related information to the relevant ICAO working groups and panels	2025 - 2030

Thank you for your attention



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