



Virtual Flight Surgeons® Inc.

“Our Physicians...Your Solution”

Quarterly Aeromedical Newsletter

14707 E. 2nd Ave., Suite 210
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1st Quarter 2009

Volume 8, Issue 1

1-866-AEROMED

FAA Aeromedical Certification- Policy Update



Medical Application Reporting - Several past issues of our newsletter address proper reporting on the FAA Form 8500-8 medical application and potential consequences for following bad advice and not fully disclosing visits, medications, etc. A good reminder was recently published in the Jan 09 edition of the FAA Aviation News and can be found at the

following link: http://www.faa.gov/news/aviation_news/ . If you have questions regarding proper reporting do not hesitate to contact our physicians.

The FAA is Looking for a Few More Good Docs - When last checked, the FAA was looking to fill a few openings for experienced flight surgeons in the Aeromedical Certification Division and potentially in the Western Pacific region as well. Qualified physicians should contact the FAA directly.

Congressionally Mandated AME Surveillance Plan - The recent Federal Air Surgeon Bulletin referenced the ongoing initiatives of the FAA to ensure pilots are getting a thorough examination and good advice from their Aviation Medical Examiners (AMEs). As such, pilots may notice an increase in the number of FAA Quality Assurance letters asking for more information following the periodic exam. Often this can be avoided if all the Aeromedically significant aspects of the medical history are provided up front at the time of exam. When questions arise, contact a VFS physician early to assist you in properly reporting or responding to such a FAA request.

ICAO Rules for duration of Medical Certificate - Recently we received some inquiries regarding the duration of medical certificates under International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) rules. Specifically the ICAO Standard 1.2.4.2.1 refers to medical validity expiring on anniversary dates of exams. However, we confirmed with Dr. Tony Evans of ICAO that the Standard includes a 45 day window to allow examinations in the US to remain valid the normal length of time through the end of the month examined regardless of the actual day one takes their examination.

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Medication Update

Byetta Update - For over a year, the injectable medication Byetta (exenatide) has been acceptable to the FAA with Special Issuance/Consideration as an option for all classes of diabetic pilots and controllers not having sufficient control of blood sugar on oral medications. Once insulin is required, pilots can only be certified for 3rd class operations and controllers have increased work restrictions. There is a 2-week observation period when replacing existing oral medications with Byetta and a 30-day observation required when adding Byetta to existing oral medications. These periods are set to ensure aviation safety by making sure there are no adverse effects such as hypoglycemia.



Ranexa (ranolazine) - Though this medication's exact mechanism of action is unknown, it is typically used for chronic angina. Its main side effects can include syncope (passing out) and dizziness and is unacceptable for use in the aviation environment.

President's Corner



The Economy, Pilot Health and Medical Certification **Quay C. Snyder, MD, MSPH**

We continue to hear of aviation companies reducing their workforces, pilot furloughs at some airlines and corporate flight departments being cut or eliminated because of financial and political pressures. Many pilots are now paying out of pocket for COBRA benefits or searching for interim jobs with health care coverage. Others who still have positions are flying more hours over more days each month. The pressures on the pilot and his/her family can be tremendous.

Regardless of the circumstances, nearly all pilots want to maintain their medical certification to continue in aviation, be it their profession or their passion. To reduce expenses or avoid a potential loss of medical certificate, a pilot may contemplate foregoing health care, stopping medications or not reporting health care visits on FAA medical applications.

If you are contemplating any of these steps, please reconsider.

First, focus on healthy lifestyle choices: proper diet, regular exercise, adequate sleep, avoiding tobacco, alcohol in moderation and safety precautions with recreational activities. Optimizing your health protects your career.

Secondly, find a financially feasible way to continue medications and seek health care if you develop significant or persistent symptoms. Protecting your health preserves your medical certificate and makes you a safer pilot.

Thirdly, report health care visits on your FAA medical applications. The FAA has the world's most liberal policies for medical certification and Special Issuance Authorizations. With proper documentation, the FAA will clear many pilots to fly with a wide variety of treated medical conditions.



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President's Corner (continued)

Don't jeopardize all of your hard earned FAA certificates and ratings by needlessly concealing medical evaluations and treatments.

VFS encourages pilots to contact our staff with any concerns about their health, FAA policies and reporting requirements. Our new Individual Pilot (IP) Plan is designed to provide pilots unlimited aeromedical services similar to a no-deductible insurance plan. For pilots without similar coverage from their employer or for the aviation enthusiast, this program mirrors the comprehensive Aeromedical Services Programs VFS provides to corporate flight departments. For information, please contact our staff. We are ready to assist both the fortunate who are flying and those who are looking for bluer skies and tailwinds.



Take care of your health first!

...Signed BD



VFS News

NBAA Aviation Safety Forum - West Coast Operators Safety Standdown - San Diego, CA. Dr. Snyder attended the NBAA sponsored event, which was hosted by Hewlett-Packard in March, providing a briefing on, "Optimizing Pilot Performance in International Operations."

NBAA International Operator's Conference (IOC) - San Diego, CA. Dr. Snyder was again on hand to provide a presentation on, "Medical Certification tips for Professional Pilots" to the nearly 500 attendees at this annual event.

Flight Safety Foundation - Corporate Aviation Committee (CAC) - Ashburn, VA. Dr. Snyder attended the fall workshop at the NTSB Training Center in November. The group discussed relevant pilot topics, to include, "The Challenge of Competent Personnel" and "Pilot Standards and Certification." The group also received a briefing on the TWA 800 mishap and toured the reconstructed aircraft.

ProPilotWorld Hosted Chat. - Dr. Parker was the guest chat subject matter expert for ProPilot World's live chat in November, addressing medical conditions commonly encountered by professional aviators. ProPilotWorld (www.propilotworld.com) is a website for pilots by pilots, dedicated to sharing information.

Congratulations Dr. Snyder! - Dr. Snyder was recently awarded the Soaring Society of America's World Distance Award for cross country (greater than 50 km) glider flights, totaling over 15,000 km.

NATCA - VFS was busy on the road in support of the NATCA membership during the first quarter of 2009. Dr. Snyder met with the Federal Air Surgeon, Dr. Fred Tilton, and his staff in March, discussing current medical qualification issues and policies. Dr. Parker attended the Eastern Regional FacRep meeting, providing a briefing and Q & A session for the members.

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Ask the Doc



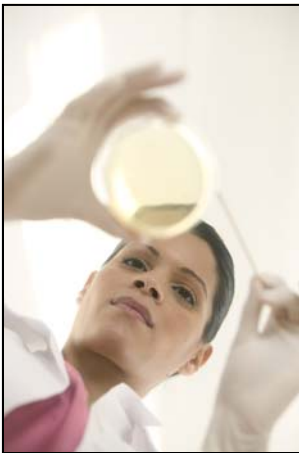
Question: Are skin cancers disqualifying?

Answer: The answer to your question is “it depends.” The FAA will be concerned to now the type of cancer, location, depth, and planned treatment. Most superficial skin cancers, such as basal cell carcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas, are not a problem once removed. The FAA requires documentation such as the pathology reports, operative reports (if any), and a final narrative from your treating provider showing full recovery. Typically, the greatest concern is ensuring the

correct diagnosis as some skin cancers such as melanomas can have a more complicated prognosis (see the next question in this newsletter for melanoma information). Topical treatment of superficial skin cancers with medications such as Aldara is becoming increasingly popular and is typically acceptable as long as there are no side effects such as distracting discomfort from treatment. Your Regional Flight Surgeon (RFS) will be happy to outline any additional required information and our physicians are happy to assist you in assembling a comprehensive package of clinical information for RFS submission.



Question: During my annual physical, my doctor took a biopsy and said I have melanoma-in-situ. Is this going to be problematic for my FAA medical?



Answer: There is a related article on our site at www.AviationMedicine.com that can be found by using the keyword search for "melanoma." As you will note in this article, a diagnosis of melanoma is disqualifying. The key consideration in your case will be the stage or depth of the lesion. Melanoma-in-situ typically is viewed as superficial and it is likely you would be able to return to controlling once fully recovered from the excisional biopsy and cleared by the Regional Flight Surgeon (RFS). For deeper melanoma, the risk of spread increases and the RFS is likely to impose an observation period to make sure there is no metastasis. The FAA policy for any melanoma less than Clark's level 4 AND Breslow thickness less than 0.75 mm with no indication of spread is that you can

be cleared to return to controlling once you have fully recovered from treatment. Typically the FAA wants to see pathology reports documenting depth of lesion and a final narrative from your physician addressing full recovery from treatment and absence of any spread. With melanomas of depth greater the 0.75 mm, the FAA requires yearly follow-up reports and typically a MRI of the brain. I recommend contacting your RFS to get an idea of the specific information they are going to require.



Spotlight: Your VFS Staff

To better acquaint you with the physician and administrative team that serves you, VFS will profile a staff member or special event each quarter. This quarter's spotlight is on Dr. Phillip Parker's recent promotion.



Congratulations Dr. Phil Parker! Dr. Parker was recently promoted to the rank of Colonel by the U.S. Air Force. As a member of the Air Force Reserves, Dr. Parker is currently serving as the Individual Augmentee to the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DoDMERB), which performs medical reviews for all officer candidates joining any branch of the Armed Forces, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marines. Dr. Parker was on Active Duty for 12 years prior to joining Virtual Flight Surgeons and the Aviation Medicine Advisory Service in 2004. During that time, he served as the flight surgeon for the nation's first operational F/A-22 "Raptor" squadron. He has flown in over 20 military aircraft with nearly 100 combat and combat support hours. He is also experienced in hyperbarics and space operations and has deployed to numerous locations, including El Salvador, Korea, Yugoslavia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar and Balad, Iraq. He then served as the Chief of Aerospace Medicine in the Colorado Air National Guard until his transfer to his current position at DoDMERB in 2008.

Your VFS Newsletter



Our services are provided to you as a benefit from your company flight department or a membership benefit from your union or aviation association. VFS stands ready as the only board certified Aerospace medicine physician group available to provide you the assistance you need. Our

physicians are always a telephone call or email click away. We can respond to your medical questions and provide advice on any potential impact on your FAA Airman's Medical Certificate for medical conditions you might develop. All client discussions with our staff members are completely confidential and risk free. VFS is proud to be your one source for Aeromedical advice and FAA medical certification waiver assistance!

We welcome your comments and suggestions!

Our goal is to make this newsletter useful and informative for all our clients. If you have an idea for a topic you would like covered or have a comment, please contact our Director of Operations, Lawan Adkins via e-mail at ladkins@aviationmedicine.com.

VFS Welcomes Our Newest Corporate Clients:

NetJets International
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OPT-OUT: If you do not wish to continue receiving the quarterly VFS Aeromedical electronic newsletter, please reply to this e-mail and type "REMOVE" in the subject line. We will remove your e-mail address from our mailing list.

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THE VFS GOAL IS TO KEEP OUR CLIENTS HEALTHY, SAFE & MEDICALLY CERTIFIED!

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