Common Issues for Students First Aviation Medical Exam

For most students, the process of obtaining a Student Pilot Certificate is simple and will result in the student leaving the office with the certificate in hand. For a few, it will require a slight delay while a piece of additional history or an updated report is obtained from their treating physician. For even fewer, there can be delays due to significant past or present issues. Our goal is to issue the medical certificate as timely as possible and to help students with the process of further evaluation if needed. Below are examples of unexpected problems we encounter that can be disappointing for both of us when not aware of before the doctor visit.

The aviation exam is straight forward and not to be feared! You complete your form on line at medxpress.faa.gov within 60 days of your appointment and bring the form with you. Once you submit your form online, you are unable to make any changes but we can update the form if needed or if an error has been made. At the exam, we review your form with you, perform physical exam with eye test, color vision, urine test and depending on age, an EKG for the heart. Please bring any glasses with you! First and Second class pilots must see 20/20 vision, Third class 20/40 vision. If all good – you’re done and leave with your Student Medical Certificate!

Most pilots are aware if they have significant medical problems that may be needed information, evaluations and reports but below are a few common problems that we encounter. This is not meant to be all-inclusive and the FAA continues to update and modify procedures. More information can be obtained at FAA.gov or by calling us. Please note that for issues that we are not able to give you your certificate and require FAA review, the process may easily take 3-4 months.
**DWI**

1. If more than five years ago and only one episode, put the full details on your form with a statement of your present alcohol use. We usually can issue.
2. If less than five years ago and blood alcohol was less than 0.15 %: We need a personal statement as to details of the episode and present alcohol use, copies of the arrest and court records. If all is favorable, we can usually issue.
3. Here is the big section: More than one DWI ever, or within the last 5 years and blood alcohol level 0.15 % or higher. The FAA will be concerned about dependency and the ability to follow rules. This will require the above reports, a chemical dependency evaluation and all driving records from states where you have held a license. We will forward these records for review and we will not be able to issue certificate.

**Attention Deficit Disorder**

The FAA does not allow the use of any medication for the treatment of ADD/ADHD. If you have this history, you will be required to obtain specific testing after being off the medication for 90 days to demonstrate the ability to perform and learn adequately. This is a lengthy process and the reports will require review by the FAA. If this pertains to you, please contact us or the FAA and we will forward the required evaluations needed. **Note:** This is not a simple note from your treating physician.
Depression/Anxiety

Of course you're anxious! You're trying to fly a plane! This section is if you have had a history of medication use (past or present) for treatment.

1. Distant past use (several years ago): put a detailed explanation on the form and we will discuss. We often can issue.

2. If you are presently using the medications there are two potential options:
   A. Discuss with your physician and discontinue medications. After 60 days, obtain current status report to include your past history with reason for use and no issues now that you are off the medication. We may need to review with the FAA but can often issue in short period of time.
   B. If you are using approved medication (Prozac, Lexapro, Zoloft, or Celexa) and have been stable on medication for 6 or more months: you may elect to stay on the medication and obtain a special issuance from the FAA. Please call us. This requires special reports and the need to see a specific aviation medical examiner.
   C. Depression/Anxiety medications not listed above are not allowed by the FAA.

Remember – it is better to be honest and upfront as to past and present issues. We can work through most issues with some time and energy. There are significant penalties for falsification. We look forward to helping you achieve your goal!

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