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## Memorandum

Date: November 7, 2018

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement | FAA's Implementation of Small Aircraft Pilot Medical Reform | Project No. 18A3009A000  
Federal Aviation Administration

From: Matthew E. Hampton   
Assistant Inspector General for Aviation Audits

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

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The United States has the largest and most diverse general aviation (GA) community in the world, with more than 220,000 aircraft, including amateur-built aircraft, rotorcraft, balloons, and highly sophisticated turbojets. To help protect safety, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) establishes medical requirements for pilots of these aircraft.

Prior to 2017, FAA required private, recreational, and student pilots, as well as flight instructors, to meet the requirements of and hold a third-class medical certificate.<sup>1</sup> These pilots obtained a medical certificate by completing a comprehensive physical examination with an FAA-designated aviation medical examiner. However, to streamline outdated regulations while preserving safety, the FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016<sup>2</sup> directed FAA to issue or revise regulations by January 11, 2017, to allow an individual to operate as pilot-in-command of certain small aircraft<sup>3</sup> without having to undergo the previous third-class medical certification process.

In January 2017, FAA issued new pilot medical requirements, known as BasicMed, that allowed these pilots to take advantage of the regulatory relief in the rule or opt to continue to use their FAA medical certificate, effective May 1, 2017. Under

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<sup>1</sup> FAA medical certificates are designated as first-class, second-class, or third-class. Generally, third-class is designed for the student, recreational, and private pilot.

<sup>2</sup> Pub. L. No. 114-190 (2016), Section 2307, Medical Certification of Certain Small Aircraft Pilots.

<sup>3</sup> BasicMed rules define this type of aircraft as one that carries no more than 6 occupants and has a maximum certificated takeoff weight of not more than 6,000 pounds, where the flight is not carried out at an altitude that is more than 18,000 feet above mean sea level or at an indicated air speed exceeding 250 knots.

BasicMed, pilots are now required to complete a medical education course, undergo a medical examination every 4 years with any State-licensed physician, and comply with aircraft and operating restrictions.

To aid in their oversight of the new BasicMed process, the Chairmen of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Aviation Subcommittee requested that we examine FAA's implementation of the new BasicMed requirements. In addition, they requested that we identify any lessons learned from FAA's implementation of this provision and the impact of the new BasicMed process on GA safety.

Accordingly, our audit objectives will be to assess (1) FAA's procedures for implementing new medical requirements for certain small aircraft pilots, including identifying challenges to its implementation; and (2) FAA's plans for measuring the impact of the new BasicMed process on aviation safety.

We plan to begin the audit in November 2018 and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at FAA Headquarters and at the Civil Aerospace Medical Institute (CAMI) in Oklahoma City, OK, as well as other locations as required. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-366-0500, or Marshall Jackson, Program Director, at 202-366-4274.

cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1  
FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100