

Conducting health psychology research for nearly two decades and collaborative research initiatives with Dr. Elizabeth Bjerke on pilot health care seeking behavior, has provided me with a greater understanding of the barriers to effectively seeking care and managing mental health among pilots. Specifically, through semi-structured interviews with both civilian and military pilot trainees, we identified barriers to receiving care that exist in early training stages. Pilot trainees report fear of disclosing symptoms, lack of health literacy, and delaying treatment seeking until symptoms become unmanageable as examples of barriers to seeking care. Due to the clear benefits of receiving mental and physical health care as early as possible, a Center for Aerospace Medicine with the capacity to serve pilots across the state of North Dakota would be a tremendous asset to ensuring optimal mental health in our aviators.

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