

According to a 2023 study by the US centers of disease control and prevention (CDC) roughly 1 and 5 adults experience regular feelings of anxiety and worry, well around 1 in 20 experience depression. Left untreated ,these conditions may contribute to approximately 50,000 suicides every year. Pilots and aviation students are no exception to these statistics, highlighting the importance of having accessible mental health support for everyone. The passing of John Hauser in October 2021 brings this issue painfully close to home and strengthens my strong support for ND House Bill 1612.

In the aviation industry, there can be significant challenges when seeking mental health support due to the stigma that surrounds it. Having trained individuals available at the University of North Dakota Center for Aerospace Medicine will help with diagnosis and treatment of metal health conditions more efficiently and more effectively.

The current FAA medical policy regarding mental health treatment is very cumbersome and difficult to maneuver. Having trained providers at the University of North Dakota Center for Aerospace Medicine to help navigate the FAA system would benefit pilots and aviation students across North Dakota. Currently commercial airlines and some aviation universities have already started to pave the pathway to having mental health services available. The University of North Dakota is poised to establish theses services for both its students and pilots across North Dakota.

As a nationally acclaimed aviation school of excellence, the University of North Dakota Aerospace Sciences is excellently positioned to provide comprehensive mental health services. In addition, it could also expand and evolve to be a leading hub for expertise in other areas of aviation medicine. The current clinical services offered by the Student Health Center and the close affiliation with the University of North Dakota School of Medicine are valuable resources that can be utilized and collaborated with for expansion of the program.

With your support, the University in North Dakota Center for Aerospace Medicine would be a pioneer in providing medical services to those in the aviation field. This would enhance and build upon the program's existing success.

Amy Diede ,MD

UND '91 and "95