

# National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Research and Engineering

Washington, DC 20594



CEN22FA298

## MEDICAL

Specialist's Factual Report

May 3, 2023

## **A. ACCIDENT**

Location: St. Jacob, Illinois  
Date: 7/2/22  
Time: 11:35 Local  
Airplane: Piper PA-24-250; N5235P

## **B. MEDICAL SPECIALIST**

Specialist Michelle Watters, MD, PhD, MPH  
National Transportation Safety Board, RE-1  
Washington, DC

## **C. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

### **Purpose**

This investigation was performed to evaluate the pilots for medical conditions, the use of medications/illicit drugs, and the presence of toxins.

### **Methods**

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) initial medical case review and the private pilot's autopsy and FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory toxicology reports<sup>1</sup> were reviewed. Other relevant medical and regulatory issues were reviewed.

## **D. FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **1.0 Private Pilot**

#### **1.1 FAA Medical Case Review**

According to the FAA initial medical case review, at the time of the accident, the 60-year-old male private pilot held a second class medical certificate with the limitation that he must wear corrective lenses and possess glasses for near/intermediate vision. At the time of his most recent FAA medical certification examination on 1/19/22, he reported 1,480 flying hours and was 73 inches tall and weighed 247 pounds. He reported taking no medications. On previous exams, he reported a history of hay fever and asthma.

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<sup>1</sup> The FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory has the capability to test for more than 1,000 substances including toxins, common prescription and over-the-counter medications, and illicit drugs. <https://jag.cami.jccbi.gov/toxicology/>

## **1.2 Autopsy**

According to the autopsy report prepared for the Madison County Coroner's Office, Edwardsville, Illinois, the cause of death of the private pilot was craniocerebral, thoracic, and abdominal blunt trauma, and the manner of death was accident. The forensic pathologist reported that the private pilot had an enlarged heart (600 grams) with a left ventricular wall of 1.6 centimeters and 50% atherosclerosis in his left anterior descending and right coronary arteries.

## **1.3 Toxicology**

Toxicology testing performed for the medical examiner's office was negative for ethanol in the private pilot's vitreous fluid and subclavian blood and for tested-for drugs in his subclavian blood and urine. Toxicology testing performed by the FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory detected the asthma medication albuterol in the private pilot's cavity blood and urine; this medication is generally considered non-impairing.<sup>2</sup>

## **2.0 Airline Transport Pilot**

### **2.1 FAA Medical Case Review**

According to the FAA medical case review, at the time of the accident, the 39-year-old male airline transport pilot held a first class medical certificate without limitation. At the time of his most recent FAA medical certification examination on 5/27/22, he reported 10,000 flying hours and was 73 inches tall and weighed 182 pounds. He reported no medical concerns, and no significant conditions were identified on physical examination.

### **2.2 Toxicology**

No hospital blood or urine specimens were obtained from the airline transport pilot for FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory toxicology testing.

## **E. SUMMARY OF MEDICAL FACTS**

The 60-year-old male private pilot held a second class medical certificate with the limitation that he must wear corrective lenses and possess glasses for near/intermediate vision. At his most recent FAA medical certification examination on 1/19/22, he reported taking no medications. He had a history of hay fever and asthma. According to the autopsy report, the cause of death of the private pilot was craniocerebral, thoracic, and abdominal blunt trauma, and the manner of death was accident. The private pilot was found to have an enlarged heart (600 grams) with a

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<sup>2</sup> FAA. Updated 1/16/19. Forensic Toxicology's WebDrugs. Albuterol. <https://jag.cami.jccbi.gov/toxicology/DrugDetail.asp?did=331>.

left ventricular wall of 1.6 centimeters and 50% atherosclerosis in his left anterior descending and right coronary arteries. Toxicology testing detected the generally non-impairing asthma medication albuterol in the private pilot's cavity blood and urine.

The 39-year-old male airline transport pilot held a first class medical certificate without limitation. At the time of his most recent FAA medical certification examination on 5/27/22, he reported no medical concerns, and no significant conditions were identified on physical examination. No specimens were obtained from the airline transport pilot for toxicology testing.

Submitted by:

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