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Date: July 29, 2026

Subject: NTSB Medical Review: Factual Information

Contact: NTSB Reviewing Medical Officer: Turan Kayagil, MD, FACEP

AUTOPSY BASIC INFORMATION (FACTUAL)

Includes only information about who performed the autopsy and the cause and manner of death information provided in the autopsy report. Any pertinent positive autopsy findings will be separately identified under "Pertinent Positives" below.

- The Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University Division of Forensic Pathology performed the pilot's autopsy.
- According to the pilot's autopsy report, his cause of death was multiple blunt force injuries and his manner of death was accident.

PERTINENT POSITIVES (FACTUAL)

Evidence of conditions or substances associated with increased risk of operator impairment or incapacitation:

- The 68-year-old male pilot's last aviation medical examination was November 18, 2023. At that time, he reported no active medical conditions and no medication use. He was noted to have a 2009 Statement of Demonstrated Ability (SODA) for defective color vision.

He was issued a third-class medical certificate limited by a requirement to use corrective lenses to meet vision standards at all required distances. • Due to the extent of the pilot's injuries, his autopsy was markedly limited for evaluation of natural disease. Structural evaluation of the brain, heart, and lungs was not possible. Aortic plaque was present.

- FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory postmortem toxicological testing detected diphenhydramine in brain tissue and kidney tissue. Propranolol was detected in brain tissue and was not detected in kidney tissue. No blood was available for testing.

DESCRIPTIONS OF PERTINENT POSITIVE SUBSTANCES (FACTUAL)

- *Diphenhydramine* – Diphenhydramine is a sedating antihistamine medication widely available over the counter in multiple sleep aids and cold and allergy products. Diphenhydramine can cause cognitive and psychomotor slowing and drowsiness, and often carries a warning about driving and operating machinery. Diphenhydramine can affect the vestibular system and it is possible that the drug might increase susceptibility to spatial disorientation. The FAA states that pilots should not fly within 60 hours of using diphenhydramine, to allow time for it to be cleared from circulation.
- *Propranolol* – Propranolol is a prescription beta-blocker medication that can be used in the treatment of several conditions, including high blood pressure, essential tremor, migraine headache, certain arrhythmias, and heart pain. Propranolol is not typically impairing and can be acceptable under the FAA's Conditions Aviation Medical Examiners Can Issue (CACI) criteria for essential tremor, migraine headache, and high blood pressure, if other conditions are met. Medical certification of pilots who report using propranolol for other reasons may be subject to FAA review.

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