



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

Office of Aerospace Medicine  
800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

**MAY 23 2016**

Dear HIMS AME,

This letter is to advise you of a significant change in the SSRI and Drug/Alcohol special issuance renewal process. Overall, we believe these changes will serve you, the airmen, and the FAA by minimizing differences between the two programs, clarifying what information is required (newly developed Certification Aid), and expediting certification. Please be clear that the new processes are **NOT** for initial special issuance consideration. The processes for initial consideration remain unchanged. The changes as well as the attached newly developed decision support HIMS AME checklists will be published in the AME Guide and will take effect June 1, 2016.

The major changes are as follows:

- 1) Currently AMEs are authorized to issue a certificate on SSRI renewals only when a Cog Screen is not due. Under the new process, AMEs may issue a 6-month time limited certificate on **ALL** SSRI renewals as long as the airman meets all criteria listed in the newly developed decision support checklist. If any single item falls into the shaded area on the checklist, you may not issue.
- 2) Currently submission of reports is variable. Under the new process, a HIMS AME report must be sent to the FAA every six months as well as the applicable decision support checklist, and any other evaluations required by the airman's authorization letter. This applies to Drug/Alcohol monitoring, SSRI or both and to all classes of medical certificate. Please note that your HIMS AME report should be **your** evaluation of the airman and not simply a summary of other reports. All renewal documents should be sent to Oklahoma City, not to Washington, D.C., and must be sent within 14 days of exam.
- 3) An in-office, face-to-face evaluation will be required a minimum of every six months. More frequent visits may be required at the AME's discretion and those may be conducted using any venue e.g. phone, video, e-mail.

Although your airmen will eventually receive a new authorization letter, you may implement the new process on June 1 with the existing authorization letter. You must advise us of any changes in the airman's status/condition immediately. Remember to exercise good clinical judgment. If you have any concerns, even if the airman meets the checklist criteria, please defer and advise us of your concerns. Together, we are responsible for the safety of the national airspace.

Thank you for the superb support you provide every day. If you have more specific questions about the new process, please contact Dr. Judy Frazier at [Judith.frazier@faa.gov](mailto:Judith.frazier@faa.gov).

Sincerely,

Penny Giovanetti, D.O., M.S.P.H.  
Manager, Medical Specialties Division

Attachments: Decision support HIMS AME checklist (2)—SSRI and drug and alcohol monitoring  
Certification Aid (2) – HIMS Renewal and SSRI Renewal