

Lessons Learned from the MedXPress Transition

It has been a few months since we made the use of MedXPress mandatory for all pilots. The transition was fairly smooth, and MedXPress has made the medical application process much more efficient than the old paper system. However, we did experience some “growing pains.” I thought it might be helpful to share some of the lessons we have learned, and to let you know that we are working hard to make this system as efficient and effective as possible.

Lesson One

In January 2013, we received a call from an aviation medical examiner (AME) who said that he had an airman in his office who was completing his MedXPress application using the AME’s computer. The airman was attempting to enter the date of his most recent exam which had been accomplished in January of 2012. However, each time the airman entered the exam date, he got an error message stating that he could not enter a future date for a previous exam. Needless to say, the airman and the AME were very frustrated. It turns out that the AME had installed his computer in 2004 and never updated the system clock. Consequently, the system would not let the airman enter a date that it “thought” was eight years into the future. Remember to keep your system’s clock up to date.

Lesson Two

We received calls stating that the aerospace medical certification subsystem (AMCS) would not retrieve an application when a confirmation number was entered. Remember that MedXPress keeps applications for only 60 days unless the AME receives the confirmation number. It’s great to avoid procrastination and last-minute scrambling that can lead to errors, but working too far in advance creates a different problem.

Lesson Three

We’ve heard quite a bit from airmen fearful of mistakenly entering incorrect information — anything from the wrong date for a doctor’s visit or a visit you completely forgot to report. You submit the form, print a copy for your records, and then you see the mistake. No need to worry. Your AME can edit almost everything on the form during your visit. The only exception is block 20, which involves the National Drivers Registry statement.

Lesson Four

Several applicants have asked us why the system does not automatically repopulate the history information on subsequent exams. They have also complained about having to remember exact dates from previous health professional visits. MedXPress was first designed so that it would repopulate the history. However, we had to eliminate this feature for legal reasons.

We realize it can be challenging to remember everything in your medical history, especially when it comes to the specific detail the FAA requires for certain conditions. That’s why it’s a good practice to keep a copy of your previous application on hand when you are completing a new one, as it will help you complete the medical history questions. This habit will help you provide consistent medical history information and jog your memory if there is an item to add or change.

And in case you are wondering, we are considering automation upgrades that will auto-populate information that will never change, such as when you had a tonsillectomy at age eight. In the meantime, estimated dates are perfectly acceptable.

Like any system, MedXPress will continue to evolve and improve. We hope you already find it quick and easy to use, but please let us know if you encounter any issues that might be systemic. Also, please encourage your AME to share any issues encountered when using the system — we can’t fix it if we haven’t found out about it. We want MedXPress to be as user friendly as possible, so help us help you.

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