

Aerospace Medical Association

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Subject: Importance of Accredited Training and Board Certification in Aerospace Medicine for the Growing Commercial Space Industry

To: Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH
President, American Medical Association
330 N Wabash Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611

Dr. Ehrenfeld,

Since the inception of human spaceflight, Aerospace Medicine (AM) physicians have played a crucial role in ensuring the well-being and success of astronauts through the delivery of high-quality clinical care and mission support. Established as a distinct specialty under the American Board of Preventive Medicine in 1953, Aerospace Medicine draws upon nationally validated standards and core competencies, which encompass the flight environment, clinical and operational aerospace medicine, and management and administration. As the largest professional organization in the fields of aviation, space, and environmental medicine, the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) is the internationally recognized authority in aerospace medicine.

The recent surge in the commercial space industry has amplified the need for AM physicians, given the increasing number of private citizens flying in new vehicles with new mission objectives every year. However, no current requirements or standards exist for medical providers working at commercial space companies, driving the creation of unregulated and unaccredited medical training pathways and the hiring of providers untrained in Aerospace Medicine.

On January 13, 2024, the membership of the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) passed a resolution to highlight the continued need for accredited training and aerospace medicine board certification for physicians leading the next generation of human spaceflight.

Board-certified AM physicians provide:

- operational experience and specific training in spacecraft systems and the health effects of microgravity
- technical authority and medical subject matter expertise on human-in-the-loop risk assessments, elimination of hazards, and trained responses to mishaps (i.e., the full spectrum from prevention to contingency response)
- medical screening of individuals, whose medical issues may compromise mission safety, via the specialist's education in population health

AEROSPACE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
THE INTERNATIONAL LEADER IN AEROSPACE MEDICINE AND HUMAN PERFORMANCE
94TH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING, HYATT REGENCY CHICAGO HOTEL,
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, MAY 5 – 9, 2024

- clinical expertise by interfacing with crew and passengers in matters to which engineers and managers in their traditional roles are not privy, to understand and mitigate health conditions that might impact spaceflight crew performance.

The AsMA resolution affirms:

- The importance of ACGME and international equivalent-accredited, standardized training and board certification in Aerospace Medicine as the highest standard of comprehensive physician training for human health, performance, and safety in human spaceflight.
- The recommendation for corporate and government aerospace communities have board-certified Aerospace Medicine physicians in leadership and operational roles within their integrated Aerospace Medicine and healthcare management teams.
- The encouragement of current AM specialists to guide and mentor new programs and trainees toward a path of obtaining internationally recognized credentials, including but not limited to Royal College of Physicians (UK), American Board of Preventive Medicine, and American Osteopathic Board of Preventive Medicine board certification in order to ensure crew and passenger safety, health, and mission success remain the highest priorities as the commercial space industry expands.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this important effort to enhance the safety of global Aerospace Medicine operations. Please feel free to contact the Aerospace Medical Association at (703) 739-2240 x105 if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph P. Dervay, M.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joseph P. Dervay, MD, MPH, MMS, FACEP, FAsMA, FUHM
President