



# Pilots for HIMS Reform

P4HR

## Pilots for HIMS Reform (P4HR) White Paper

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# Pilots for HIMS Reform

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## Mission, Vision, and Strategic Direction (2026–2030)

### Executive Summary

Pilots for HIMS Reform (P4HR) is a nonprofit advocacy coalition established to modernize and humanize the Federal Aviation Administration’s medical certification and monitoring system for pilots. P4HR arose in response to mounting evidence that the FAA’s current “Human Intervention Motivation Study” (HIMS) program – a decades-old system for monitoring pilots with substance use or mental health histories – has become **coercive, unscientific, and rights-infringing**<sup>[1]</sup>. By championing transparency, fairness, and evidence-based practices, P4HR strives to protect both **aviation safety** and **pilot well-being**, viewing these goals as inextricably linked. In its first year, the organization has already galvanized a network of pilots and supporters, elevated first-hand testimonials of those affected by HIMS, and introduced comprehensive reform legislation in Congress. Looking ahead, P4HR’s strategic roadmap (2026–2030) centers on **institutional reform, innovative support programs, and broad stakeholder engagement** to achieve a **fair, accountable, and scientifically grounded aeromedical system**. Key initiatives will include pushing for enactment of the Pilots for HIMS Reform Act, rolling out pilot-centered alternatives to HIMS, expanding data-driven oversight tools, and forging partnerships across the aviation and medical communities. This white paper details P4HR’s mission and vision, core values guiding its work, the impact it has made to date, and the strategic initiatives planned for the next 3–5 years. It concludes with a call to action inviting pilots, policymakers, industry leaders, and allies to join in advancing safer skies through compassionate and rational reform.

## Introduction

### What is P4HR and Why Was It Founded?

*Pilots for HIMS Reform* (P4HR) is a grassroots initiative of airline pilots and aviation professionals dedicated to reforming the FAA’s approach to pilot health and recovery. The name “P4HR” stands for *Pilots for HIMS Reform*, referencing the FAA’s **Human Intervention Motivation Study (HIMS)** program – a rehabilitation and monitoring system originally created in the 1970s for pilots with substance use disorders<sup>[2]</sup>. Over time, HIMS expanded to encompass mental health issues (such as antidepressant use) but has remained largely **untouched for over 50 years**, even as medical science and legal standards evolved<sup>[2]</sup>. The result, as reported by independent reviews, is a program often criticized for **opaque, punitive practices and lack of scientific transparency**. In 2023, a congressionally mandated National Academies study found “*no solid evidence to support HIMS’s claims of success*” and noted it could not verify the program’s outcomes because the FAA and pilots’ union **withheld data** needed for

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evaluation[3]. That lack of accountability, combined with policies like **lifetime monitoring** (instituted by the FAA in 2020) that can tether pilots to surveillance for their entire careers[4], has fueled concerns that HIMS in its current form may do as much harm as good.

## The Problem and Opportunity

Pilots and air traffic controllers have described the HIMS experience as **highly coercive** – one where fear of losing one’s license is leveraged to enforce compliance[5][6]. Any member of a pilot’s monitoring team (airline supervisors, peer monitors, HIMS doctors, etc.) can effectively derail a career, creating a climate of “*fear, coercion, and silence*”. Indeed, many pilots admit they **hide or delay seeking mental health care** out of fear that disclosing issues or treatment will trigger automatic grounding and protracted scrutiny[7]. “*If you aren’t lying, you aren’t flying,*” as one Reuters investigation titled it, reflecting a dangerous culture where untreated problems are kept in the shadows to avoid career repercussions[8]. This status quo poses a clear risk to aviation safety and pilot well-being alike: when pilots are pushed into secrecy and *feel they have “no voice,” safety is weakened – not strengthened*[9].

Amid growing recognition of these issues – from high-profile legal cases of alleged HIMS misuse[10] to tragic outcomes linked to stigma and untreated illness[11][7] – P4HR was founded to seize the opportunity for change. The organization was established in **2024** by veteran pilots (including Capt. Mike Danford and Capt. Maurice MacEwen, who serve as co-founders) and supporters who experienced first-hand, or witnessed in colleagues, the shortcomings of the current system. P4HR’s formation comes at a pivotal moment: industry leaders and regulators have started to acknowledge that “*the system needs improvement*” and “*data is lacking,*” even as they have been reluctant to openly share data or embrace reform[12][13]. In this context, P4HR positions itself as a **constructive catalyst** – aiming to collect independent data, propose evidence-based solutions, and advocate for a modernized framework that better balances safety with compassion.

## Context of Founding

P4HR emerged as part of a broader movement of pilot-led advocacy that has taken shape in recent years[14]. Following the National Academies’ damning 2023 report and other revelations, numerous initiatives sprouted – including independent surveys, support networks, and legal challenges – all signaling that those “*caught in the gears*” of the HIMS program were no longer willing to suffer in silence[15]. Pilots for HIMS Reform quickly became a leading voice in this movement, offering a unified platform for reform-minded aviators. The group was formally introduced to the wider industry at the FAA’s 2025 HIMS Seminar in Denver, where P4HR representatives openly pressed FAA officials about the “*lack of program data*” and biased practices, marking the first time an independent pilot coalition directly confronted HIMS administrators in a public forum[16][17]. This bold debut signaled that P4HR was determined to

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engage constructively with all stakeholders – from individual pilots and medical examiners to airline unions and

federal regulators – to drive meaningful change. The challenges are substantial: HIMS is deeply entrenched, and its opaque culture has long been insulated by stigma and fear. But P4HR sees a clear *opportunity* to replace this outdated system with one that is **transparent, just, and effective** for the next generation of aviators. The sections that follow outline P4HR’s vision for that future, the mission and values guiding its work, the impact achieved so far, and the strategic direction planned to turn opportunity into reality.

## Vision and Mission

### Vision

P4HR envisions an aviation industry in which **pilot health and safety are protected through fair, transparent, and science-driven policies**. The organization’s long-term vision is a future where seeking help for a substance use issue or mental health concern is met with support and *evidence-based care* rather than career-ending punishment – a future in which **safer skies** are achieved by aligning medical oversight with modern science, civil liberties, and human dignity. In this envisioned future state, **aeromedical processes are humane and accountable**: pilots know the rules and criteria up front, outcomes are based on objective standards, and no individual is subjected to unending monitoring or coercive treatment “in the name of helping them.”

### Mission

To realize this vision, P4HR has a clear and focused mission. In the organization’s own words, “*Our mission at P4HR is simple*”<sup>[18]</sup>:

#### Protect Aviation Safety

P4HR works to ensure that reforms never compromise safety – in fact, the mission is *to enhance safety* by creating a system where pilots can address health issues without fear. A truly safe aviation system is one where **transparency and accountability** replace secrecy and stigma, because “*safety must always be non-negotiable*”<sup>[19]</sup>. By pushing for clear standards and early interventions (as opposed to hidden problems), P4HR’s efforts aim to *strengthen* the safety net around air travel.

#### Protect Human Dignity

At its core, P4HR advocates for treating pilots and other aviation personnel as humans, not statistics or liabilities. This means upholding **civil rights, due process, and compassionate care** in all aeromedical decisions. The mission emphasizes that pilots who step forward for help should not have their lives derailed or be subjected to humiliation. P4HR seeks to embed

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*“humanity”* back into the system – recognizing that **pilots and controllers are not disposable assets** but skilled professionals deserving respect[20].

## Push for a Modern, Transparent & Accountable Framework

P4HR’s mission is ultimately about **replacing the outdated HIMS model** with a 21st-century aeromedical framework grounded in science, clarity, and accountability. The goal is to end the days of vague, open-ended requirements and instead implement *objective criteria and oversight*. As P4HR puts it, no pilot should be *“destroyed in the name of ‘helping’ them”*[21]. Concretely, this involves advocating for **independent oversight bodies, data-driven program evaluation, time-bound monitoring** (with defined endpoints), and the incorporation of modern medical understandings of recovery (e.g. recognition that substance use disorder can remit over time, rather than assuming “once an addict, always an addict”[22]). In sum, the mission calls for a *transparent, evidence-based aeromedical process – one that respects due process and uses sound science at every step*[23].

These three mission pillars – safety, dignity, and reform – guide everything P4HR does. They reflect a commitment to *dual loyalty*: to the *flying public* (ensuring safer skies) and to the *pilots themselves* (ensuring just treatment). P4HR aligns with the philosophy that **aviation safety and pilot well-being rise and fall together**[9]. By advocating policies that uphold both, the organization fulfills its core purpose.

## Core Principles and Values

P4HR’s work is grounded in a set of **core principles and values** that inform every decision and initiative. These values define the culture of the organization and the approach it takes to advocacy:

### Safety as Paramount

*“Pro-safety – because safety must always be non-negotiable.”*[19] Safety is the North Star for P4HR. The organization will never pursue reforms that compromise the safety of flight crews or passengers. On the contrary, P4HR believes that **real safety is achieved through clarity and fairness** in the system. By eliminating the fear-induced hiding of health issues, P4HR’s reforms aim to *improve* safety outcomes. Every proposal is evaluated through the lens of: does this make the aviation system safer? If the answer is not a resounding yes, it doesn’t align with P4HR’s values.

### Scientific Integrity and Evidence

*“Pro-science – because data and evidence must outrank fear and politics.”*[19] A key value for P4HR is that decisions affecting a pilot’s career and health should be based on **sound medical**

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**science and objective evidence**, not on stigma, outdated beliefs, or financial incentives. This principle translates into championing **evidence-based practices** – for example, using modern diagnostic criteria and biomarkers appropriately, adhering to proven treatment protocols, and collecting outcome data to continually assess what works. P4HR rejects approaches that rely on coercion or tradition in lieu of empirical support. The value of scientific integrity also means pushing for **transparency of data**: The FAA and its partners must share program results and methodologies so they can be independently verified<sup>[3]</sup>. In short, *truth and data drive progress*.

## Humanity and Compassion

*“Pro-human – because pilots and controllers are not disposable assets.”*<sup>[20]</sup> P4HR places human dignity at the forefront. This value is about **empathy, respect, and support** for those going through aeromedical evaluations or recovery. The organization insists that being flagged for a health condition should not entail shame or inhumane treatment. Values like **fairness, respect for individual rights, and confidentiality** flow from this principle. P4HR advocates trauma-informed and compassionate approaches – ensuring pilots are given a fair chance to get well and return to work, rather than being trapped in an endless punitive process. This ethos also includes **fighting stigma**: P4HR actively works to change the culture that labels or ostracizes individuals for seeking help<sup>[24]</sup>. Every person in the aviation system deserves to be treated as a valued member of the community, not as a liability.

## Transparency and Accountability

P4HR believes that sunlight is the best disinfectant for any flawed system. A core value is **transparency** – in program criteria, in decision-making, and in outcomes. Pilots should have a clear understanding of what is required of them and why. Likewise, those in power (medical examiners, program managers, airline officials) must be **accountable** for their decisions. This means establishing independent oversight mechanisms and clear standards to check against abuse of discretion. The organization pushes for measures like defined monitoring periods, published criteria for “successful recovery,” and appeals processes so that no one’s fate rests on arbitrary judgments<sup>[25][10]</sup>. P4HR exemplifies transparency in its own actions as well – for instance, publishing policy analyses and court research on problem areas<sup>[26][27]</sup>. The value here is simple: *honesty and openness build trust* – and trust is essential for both safety and effective healthcare.

## Collaboration and Inclusivity

From its inception, P4HR has been **coalition-oriented**. The value of collaboration is evident in its outreach to various stakeholders: pilots of all backgrounds, air traffic controllers, flight attendants, physicians, mental health professionals, unions, airlines, and regulators. P4HR does not see itself as an adversary to these groups but as a partner seeking solutions that benefit all.



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This collaborative spirit means listening to diverse perspectives – including those who support the current system – and engaging in good faith dialogue. It also means supporting **families and peers** of affected pilots, recognizing that a pilot's struggle can ripple out to loved ones<sup>[28]</sup>. By fostering an inclusive, big-tent movement, P4HR leverages collective wisdom and amplifies the voices of those who need change the most. The principle is that *lasting reform will require broad buy-in*, so the process must welcome all who are willing to work toward a better system.

These core values – **Safety, Science, Humanity, Transparency, and Collaboration** – serve as the compass for P4HR's initiatives. They ensure that as the organization grows and adapts, it remains true to its founding ethos. Every campaign, public comment, or support program P4HR undertakes is reflective of one or more of these guiding values. In practice, these principles translate to initiatives like confidential surveys and data tools (transparency + science), legislative advocacy for due process (safety + accountability), peer support networks (humanity + collaboration), and educational outreach to demystify policies (science + transparency). Together, the values create a vision of a reformed system that is **safer, smarter, and more compassionate** – and they keep P4HR on course toward that vision.

## Current Impact

Although P4HR is a relatively young organization, its impact in a short time has been significant. Since its launch, P4HR has transformed the frustration of individual pilots into a focused movement, achieving concrete progress on multiple fronts. Below are key accomplishments and activities that illustrate P4HR's current impact and how it operates today:

### Building a Supportive Community

P4HR has established a **nationwide (and even international) support network** for pilots and aviation personnel who previously felt isolated in their struggles with HIMS. In the past year, the coalition has "*connected aviation professionals who thought they were completely alone*," creating a safe space to share experiences and find solidarity<sup>[29]</sup>. Through its website and social media channels, P4HR curates anonymous pilot testimonials ("Real Stories") from those who have faced HIMS oversight due to issues like alcohol use, prescription medications, or mental health disclosures<sup>[30][31]</sup>. These stories, shared confidentially, **reveal the human cost of a broken system** and let affected individuals know they are not alone. By elevating these voices, P4HR has helped reduce stigma and empowered pilots to speak up. The community-building aspect is also evident in P4HR's events and communications – from an online forum where members exchange advice, to outreach messages around holidays (e.g. a Thanksgiving message thanking pilots and families for "refusing to accept that opaque, inconsistent, and punitive processes are 'just the way it is'"<sup>[15]</sup>). In short, P4HR has become a rallying point for those seeking change, converting fear and isolation into **mutual support and collective action**.





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## Advocacy and Policy Influence

P4HR has rapidly become a leading *advocacy voice* on aeromedical reform, engaging both policymakers and industry leaders. A signature achievement is the development of the **Pilots for HIMS Reform Act of 2026**, a comprehensive reform bill that P4HR drafted and championed. This proposed legislation (formally introduced in Congress in late 2025) codifies many of P4HR's core goals – including enforcing due process in FAA medical actions, establishing independent medical review panels, mandating reasonable timelines for certification decisions, and prohibiting the most “*coercive, unvalidated, or discriminatory practices*” in current use[32]. The P4HR Act of 2026 presents a “*transparent, evidence-based alternative to the current FAA HIMS Program*”[33], effectively laying out a blueprint for change. To support this legislative push, P4HR has produced policy briefs and hosted meetings with lawmakers. For instance, in September 2025 P4HR released a two-page briefing that documented FAA admissions from the 2025 HIMS Seminar (e.g. delays, lack of appeals, false-positive test issues) and mapped each problem to a solution found in the P4HR Act[34]. P4HR representatives have also engaged decision-makers directly: in January 2026, a P4HR co-founder personally briefed FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford on HIMS reform concerns – from outdated policy to the stigma pilots face – ensuring that the message reached the very top of the agency[35]. Furthermore, P4HR has filed formal complaints and spurred oversight in specific cases; for example, after an administrative law judge upheld a questionable HIMS-related ruling against a pilot despite 58 clean drug tests and years of abstinence, P4HR filed complaints with the National Transportation Safety Board and U.S. Office of Special Counsel, pressing for accountability[10]. Through these actions, P4HR has already influenced the conversation in Washington and within the FAA, moving reform from a fringe issue to a serious topic on the aviation agenda.

## Data Collection and Research

A cornerstone of P4HR's approach is to fill the “*data gap*” that has long plagued discussions of HIMS effectiveness[12]. To that end, P4HR launched the **HIMS Voices Project** in late 2025 – the first independent, *research-grade* survey of pilots' experiences with HIMS and similar aeromedical processes[36]. This confidential survey is encrypted end-to-end to protect participants, encouraging honest input without fear of repercussions[37][38]. The Voices Project gathers detailed metrics: why and how pilots were placed into HIMS, the duration and cost of monitoring, testing frequency and errors, treatment requirements, any instances of retaliation or due process violations, and overall outcomes[39][40]. Crucially, it also captures *narrative feedback* – what helped, what harmed, and what participants feel must change[41][42]. In just the first few weeks, dozens of pilots (and some controllers, family members, and clinicians) have submitted responses, and patterns have already begun to emerge[43][44]. P4HR's team (in collaboration with data experts) is analyzing this information to produce evidence that can guide policy. The mere existence of the Voices Project has made waves: P4HR noted that some

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“industry-leading organizations” initially refused to share the survey link, even while those same organizations claimed more data was needed[12] – a reaction that P4HR has publicly challenged as indicative of conflicts of interest or “*narrative control*” fears. By pressing forward, P4HR is **transforming anecdote into aggregate evidence**, which will be used in reports, academic publications, and advocacy campaigns. In addition to the survey, P4HR conducts and publishes in-depth research on specific issues. The group’s website features analyses of topics like “*unguided discretion*” in HIMS (how vague standards allow potentially endless monitoring)[45], legal case studies of HIMS psychiatric evaluators with troubling records[26], and comparisons between civilian and military aeromedical rules[46]. This growing library of white papers and articles (often citing peer-reviewed science and legal precedents) has started to influence experts in aerospace medicine and law. By grounding its advocacy in **hard data and rigorous research**, P4HR has gained credibility and illuminated the path for evidence-based reform.

## Innovative Tools and Solutions

Beyond critique, P4HR is actively developing *solutions* to demonstrate how a better system might work. One example is the **AEROPath program** (Aviation Evaluation & Recovery Oversight Pathway) – a pilot-centered alternative to the traditional HIMS model[47]. AEROPath is designed around the principles of **recovery, fairness, and data**: it would offer monitoring and support that are tailored to individual circumstances, employ the latest medical best practices (including non-punitive support for mental health), and set clear milestones for progress. By proposing AEROPath, P4HR shows its commitment to *constructive reform*: rather than just highlighting problems, it’s proposing a concrete framework that stakeholders could adopt or pilot as a replacement for HIMS. Another innovative tool launched by P4HR is the **Aeromedical Compass**[48] – a neutral, confidential online directory that **ranks aeromedical service providers (such as HIMS Aviation Medical Examiners and clinics) based on transparent, evidence-weighted criteria**. This tool allows pilots to submit verified information about their experiences (redacted documents, corroborated reports, public records), and assigns providers to tiers like “Trusted,” “Watch,” or “Under Review” according to their demonstrated practices[49][50]. Importantly, Aeromedical Compass is *not* a forum for unvetted anecdotes; it only publishes de-identified summaries backed by documentation, and it gives providers a right-of-reply to ensure fairness[51][52]. By introducing this resource, P4HR directly addresses the imbalance of information that often exists – pilots usually know little about the doctors evaluating them, but now they can benefit from a community-vetted knowledge base. Aeromedical Compass has the dual effect of **incentivizing better practices** (ethical providers can be recognized in higher tiers, while problematic patterns are flagged) and empowering pilots to make informed choices about their care. This initiative exemplifies P4HR’s inventive use of technology and collective data to bring **transparency and accountability** into aviation medicine[53][54]. Overall, through AEROPath, Aeromedical Compass, and other tools (like



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legal toolkits for pilots' rights<sup>[55]</sup>), P4HR is showing what a reformed system could look like in practice.

## Public Awareness and Cultural Shift

P4HR recognizes that technical fixes alone won't suffice – changing the *culture* around pilot mental health and substance use is critical. To that end, P4HR has actively engaged in public awareness campaigns. The organization has been featured in media discussions and has leveraged platforms from Facebook to X (Twitter) to disseminate its message that “*pilot well-being and national airspace safety rise and fall together.*”<sup>[38]</sup> P4HR's communications stress that acknowledging and addressing problems is a strength, not a weakness, in aviation. They often highlight success stories of pilots who got help and returned to flying safely, and conversely, the cautionary tales of those who suffered by staying silent. By framing reform as *pro-safety, pro-pilot, and pro-modernization*, P4HR is reframing the narrative that had cast any critique of HIMS as antagonistic to safety. This narrative work appears to be yielding results: anecdotal feedback from industry conferences indicates more open dialogue about HIMS shortcomings, and even FAA and airline officials have started mentioning the need to reduce stigma and improve support (mirroring language P4HR has been amplifying). P4HR also isn't afraid to be creative in outreach – for example, in late 2025 it produced “**Wings of Reform**,” a music album featuring songs inspired by pilots' experiences, as a way to spread awareness through art and reach new audiences<sup>[56]</sup>. From policy circles to grassroots channels, P4HR has significantly **raised the visibility** of HIMS reform issues. Perhaps most telling, one of the world's leading news outlets, *Reuters*, gave prominent coverage to pilots' mental health struggles in December 2025<sup>[57][7]</sup>, reinforcing exactly the points P4HR has been making. In essence, P4HR has helped turn what was once a taboo or niche topic into a mainstream safety and human rights concern that stakeholders can no longer ignore.

Through these achievements, P4HR has demonstrated its capacity as a **change-maker** in a short span. The organization has combined **research and advocacy, support and pressure, insider engagement and public campaigning** in a balanced strategy. Importantly, P4HR's impact so far has laid a strong foundation for the next phase of its work. By connecting those who need help, influencing policymakers, gathering data, innovating solutions, and shifting mindsets, P4HR has positioned itself as the credible leader of the HIMS reform movement. The momentum is now in place to drive forward the strategic initiatives described in the next section.

## Future Roadmap (2026–2030)

P4HR's strategic plan for the next 3–5 years builds on its early successes and tackles the remaining gaps to achieve its vision. The future roadmap focuses on **institutional change, program innovation, stakeholder partnerships, and cultural transformation**. Below are the key initiatives and milestones P4HR aims to pursue:

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## Legislative and Regulatory Reform

P4HR will continue to **champion the passage of comprehensive reform legislation** to codify lasting changes in FAA policy. The immediate goal is to see the *Pilots for HIMS Reform Act of 2026* (or its key provisions) enacted into law. This will involve working with members of Congress, providing expert testimony, and mobilizing grassroots support. P4HR will push for inclusion of its reforms in the upcoming FAA Reauthorization bill or as standalone legislation. Key legislative milestones include establishing **independent oversight boards** for medical certification appeals, embedding **due process rights** (such as timely review and the ability to seek a second medical opinion), and mandating **data transparency** about program outcomes<sup>[58]</sup>. If portions of the P4HR Act cannot pass immediately, the organization will advocate interim steps – for example, urging the FAA to implement regulatory changes (via the Federal Air Surgeon’s office or rulemaking committees) that align with the Act’s intent, such as removing the lifetime monitoring policy or clarifying end-of-monitoring criteria. By 2030, P4HR’s objective is that the FAA’s aeromedical regulations and guidance reflect **modern, science-based standards** and that an independent review mechanism exists for contested cases. Success will be measured by concrete policy changes: e.g., new FAA rules that eliminate indefinite HIMS requirements, adoption of a standard that pilots are “*physically able to perform their duties*” as the key fitness criterion (replacing vague notions of “satisfactory recovery” with objective medical benchmarks<sup>[59]</sup>), and formal channels for pilots to report concerns without retaliation. P4HR will also monitor and contribute to related policy efforts, such as the FAA’s Mental Health Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC) recommendations and any legislative initiatives to address pilot mental fitness, ensuring they are not half-measures but fully address the punitive aspects of the current system<sup>[60]</sup>. In summary, **institutional reform is a top priority** on the roadmap – P4HR intends to help write the rules that will govern aeromedical oversight for decades to come, anchoring them in **fairness and scientific integrity**.

## Implementing AEROPath and Alternative Programs

On the programmatic front, a major strategic push is to **develop and pilot alternative pathways** for pilot monitoring and rehabilitation. P4HR plans to refine its AEROPath model and work with willing partners (airlines, possibly insurers or independent medical groups) to launch **pilot projects** that demonstrate a better approach in action. In the next few years, P4HR will seek out an airline or corporate flight department to collaborate on an AEROPath trial for their employees, or advocate for FAA approval of an alternative compliance program. The AEROPath initiative would create a structured, voluntary program where pilots with issues like substance dependence or depression can enter a support system that emphasizes treatment, mentoring, and periodic evaluation – but with **clear timelines and criteria for return-to-duty**, unlike the open-ended HIMS<sup>[61]</sup>. P4HR’s role would be to provide the program framework, help coordinate expert resources (e.g. addiction medicine specialists, psychologists, peer support counselors),

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and collect data on outcomes. The goal is to prove that “*tough, evidence-based pilot recovery programs [can operate] without destroying careers,*” as other countries have already shown<sup>[62]</sup>. In fact, P4HR will incorporate **global best practices**: studies of programs in the UK, New Zealand, Canada, Japan (and the U.S. military’s approach) indicate that it is feasible to maintain high standards **with clear timelines, quality medical care, and respect for privacy**<sup>[62]</sup>. P4HR aims to bring the U.S. on par with these international benchmarks. Within 5 years, a success indicator would be the FAA agreeing to an official “*HIMS alternative*” pilot program (perhaps under exemption or trial status) guided by AEROPath principles – a program that, if successful, could then scale up to replace the current system. Additionally, P4HR will expand its **Aeromedical Compass** and toolkit initiatives, which complement programmatic reform. By 2026–2027, P4HR plans to have the Aeromedical Compass populated with a critical mass of data, covering most major HIMS AMEs and clinics, thereby exerting pressure on those providers to improve or risk being flagged. This tool will be kept up-to-date and possibly extended (e.g. adding a section for evaluating treatment facilities or labs used in testing). The **future state** P4HR is driving toward is one where multiple, pilot-friendly options exist for addressing health issues – options that focus on *rehabilitation and return to service* rather than punishment. Achieving this will prove by example that reform not only benefits pilots, but also serves the aviation industry by retaining valuable personnel and promoting a safety culture of openness.

## Expanded Data and Research Efforts

Building on the momentum of the HIMS Voices Project, P4HR’s roadmap features a robust research agenda. Over the next 2–3 years, the organization will **compile and publish the findings** from its independent survey. This will likely result in a comprehensive report (or series of reports) highlighting statistics such as average monitoring duration, typical costs borne by pilots, relapse rates, and correlations between program practices and outcomes. P4HR plans to share these results with the FAA, airlines, unions, and the public, using the data to make the case for specific reforms (for example, if data show that pilots monitored beyond a certain number of years have no better outcomes, that would support capping monitoring periods). P4HR may also seek to publish its research in peer-reviewed journals or present at aviation medicine conferences to further legitimize the findings. Additionally, the organization will continue its investigative research into areas of concern – anticipating issues that require policy fixes. For instance, P4HR might study the impact of new biochemical tests (like the PEth alcohol biomarker) on false-positive rates, or analyze case data from legal appeals to identify patterns of bias. By 2028, P4HR envisions establishing a small “**Research Council**” comprising experts in epidemiology, psychiatry, law, and human factors, who can advise on studies and interpret data. This council could help produce an *annual “State of Aeromedical Oversight” report*, tracking progress (or lack thereof) in metrics like pilot health outcomes, utilization of support programs, and any reduction in adverse incidents or suicides related to untreated issues. The ultimate aim is to create an **ongoing feedback loop**: continuous data collection and analysis that informs policy

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tweaks in real time. This would mirror how safety data is used in other domains of aviation. As P4HR often notes, what gets measured gets managed – so the future system must measure what truly matters (wellness and safety, not just compliance). By institutionalizing independent data oversight, P4HR strives to ensure that the reforms of 2025–2030 are sustained and adapt based on evidence.

## Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

Recognizing that it cannot achieve systemic change alone, P4HR’s strategy places heavy emphasis on **forming partnerships** across the aviation and healthcare sectors. In the coming years, P4HR will deepen its collaboration with pilot unions (such as ALPA and others) – encouraging them to jointly advocate for reforms and to provide better support to their members. P4HR has already started dialogues with some union leaders and will aim to formalize these relationships, perhaps via memoranda of understanding or joint working groups on HIMS reform. Likewise, P4HR will engage airline management and industry associations by highlighting the *business case* for reform (for example, how a fairer system could reduce pilot attrition and training costs, and improve safety reporting culture). Another key partnership front is with **medical and mental health organizations**. P4HR intends to work alongside groups like the Aerospace Medical Association, independent Aviation Medical Examiners (AMEs) who support change, and mental health nonprofits (like those for addiction recovery). By bringing these professionals into the conversation, P4HR can help develop better training for HIMS doctors (emphasizing modern addiction medicine and bias avoidance), as well as create a referral network of “*pilot-aware*” treatment providers who understand the unique career implications. Technology and privacy partners will also be crucial – P4HR may partner with tech firms or cybersecurity experts to enhance its encrypted platforms and ensure pilot data remains secure. On the governmental side, P4HR will continue outreach to agencies like the Department of Transportation’s OIG (Inspector General) and even the Department of Veterans Affairs (since many pilots are veterans) to find allies in oversight and resources for affected individuals. Internationally, P4HR plans to connect with counterparts in other countries – sharing lessons with European and Asia-Pacific aviation authorities that have similar programs, and possibly convening an international symposium on pilot wellness and oversight. By 2030, P4HR aims to be at the center of a **broad coalition** that includes not only pilots, but forward-thinking FAA officials, airline leaders, medical experts, legal advocates, and global partners, all working in concert. The success of this approach will be seen in, for example, joint statements or guidelines issued by multiple stakeholders endorsing the new direction, and perhaps a public-private task force on implementing reforms. P4HR’s guiding belief is that *lasting change requires buy-in from all sides*, so building these partnerships is both a strategic means and an end: it will create a supportive ecosystem to sustain the reforms and ensure no stakeholder’s perspective is left out.

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## Cultural Change and Education

Changing policies and procedures is necessary but not sufficient without addressing the underlying culture. Thus, a key element of P4HR's future work is **education and cultural leadership**. P4HR will expand its efforts to educate pilots and aviation personnel about their rights, about HIMS and any new systems, and about mental health and substance use issues in general. Plans include developing a comprehensive **"Pilot Wellness and Rights" training module** that could be delivered at flight schools, airlines, and union meetings to normalize conversations around seeking help and to inform aviators of the resources available (like P4HR's toolkits and support network). Additionally, P4HR will continue to produce public-facing content – articles, videos, webinars, even documentaries – to shine light on both the problems and solutions. A near-term initiative is creating a short documentary or a series of testimonial videos from pilots who have been through HIMS, to be released online for broader awareness. P4HR also intends to engage in the industry's safety conferences and human factors workshops to embed the concept that mental health is part of safety. By consistently injecting the values of openness and compassion into industry dialogues, P4HR aims to erode the long-standing stigma. Another facet of cultural change is addressing the **support network around pilots**: P4HR will develop materials for families, peers, and employers on how to support someone going through a monitoring program, converting what can sometimes be an environment of pressure into one of genuine help[28]. Over the next few years, a goal is to collaborate with at least one major airline to revamp its internal policies – for example, encouraging self-disclosure of issues by offering pathways to get help without automatic punishment (akin to how some companies handle self-reporting of substance issues in a non-punitive manner). Metrics for cultural progress are harder to quantify, but P4HR will look for signs such as increased pilot uptake of voluntary counseling programs, reductions in reports of suicidal ideation linked to fear of HIMS, and positive testimonials from pilots who felt supported in addressing their health. By 2030, success would mean that *"opaque and punitive processes"* are no longer accepted as the norm[63], and phrases like *"mental health stigma in aviation"* are relics of the past. P4HR's ambition is to help foster an aviation culture where **asking for help is seen as responsible, not detrimental**. This cultural evolution, combined with the concrete policy changes, will mark the true success of P4HR's mission.

Each of these roadmap initiatives reinforces the others. Legislative changes empower better programs; successful pilot programs provide proof for further policy change; partnerships strengthen data efforts; cultural change makes all the technical changes work better, and so on. P4HR has a comprehensive strategy to tackle the issue from every angle – regulatory, practical, social, and technological. The next 3–5 years will be critical. If P4HR's plans bear fruit, by 2030 the FAA's approach to pilot health could look dramatically different: a system with **transparent rules, fair oversight, robust support for recovery, and a culture that values safety and compassion in equal measure**. That is the future P4HR is determined to create.

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## Call to Action

P4HR's mission cannot be achieved in isolation – it requires the active involvement and support of multiple stakeholders across the aviation community and beyond. This final section is a **call to action**, inviting all concerned parties to participate in and support the movement for HIMS reform and pilot wellness. Depending on your role, here's how you can help:

### Pilots and Air Traffic Controllers

*Your voice and experience are crucial.* If you are a pilot or controller who has been affected by the HIMS program or any aeromedical process, P4HR urges you to **share your story** and contribute to the data that will drive change. Consider participating (anonymously if you wish) in the HIMS Voices Project survey or submitting a testimonial to P4HR's confidential story collection [\[64\]](#)[\[42\]](#). By doing so, you help expose what works and what doesn't, transforming personal experiences into evidence for reform. If you need assistance or are currently navigating the HIMS process, reach out to P4HR's support network – **you are not alone**, and peer support or guidance on rights is available. P4HR also calls on you to **join the coalition**: subscribe to updates, attend virtual town halls, or volunteer with P4HR's initiatives. Every additional pilot who gets involved strengthens the collective voice. As one anonymous pilot put it, *"I followed every rule... but they treated me like I had no voice. Reform is not optional – it's overdue."* [\[65\]](#). By uniting our voices, we can ensure that message is heard loud and clear.

### Aviation Organizations (Airlines, Unions, Associations)

*Be partners in proactive reform.* P4HR seeks the engagement of airlines and pilot unions in creating a better system. Airlines are encouraged to support their pilots by **embracing reform principles**: for example, work with P4HR to pilot the AEROPath program within your organization, or adopt policies that encourage self-disclosure without punitive reflexes. Recognize that a pilot seeking help is aiming to become safer, which aligns with your safety management goals. Unions and associations (like ALPA, APA, etc.), you have a powerful voice – use it to **advocate for your members' rights and well-being**. Join forces with P4HR in calling for due process protections and reasonable medical standards in the FAA regulations. You can also help by disseminating P4HR's educational materials to your membership, incorporating them in union newsletters or meetings so that every pilot knows what resources and recourse they have. Moreover, both airlines and unions can lend support by providing anonymized data (if available) on outcomes or by facilitating introductions between P4HR and key decision-makers. In short, the call to you is: **become champions of change from within the system**. By publicly endorsing the need for HIMS reform and contributing constructively (perhaps via a joint industry working group on pilot health), you signal that ensuring pilots' health is integral to ensuring safety. P4HR stands ready to collaborate; together we can build an aeromedical process that pilots trust and that truly serves the industry's long-term interests.

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## Medical and Mental Health Professionals

*Help redefine aeromedical best practices.* If you are an Aviation Medical Examiner, a HIMS psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist, or any healthcare provider involved in treating or evaluating aviators, P4HR invites you to be part of the solution. We ask conscientious professionals to **speak up for science and ethics**. This could mean advocating within your professional circles for more training on addiction and mental health, refusing to participate in unscientific testing regimens, or providing expert input to P4HR's research and policy efforts. You can collaborate with P4HR by reviewing proposed guidelines, contributing to the development of fair evaluation protocols, or serving on advisory panels. P4HR's Aeromedical Compass welcomes your engagement too – if you strive for fairness, encourage your patients (pilot clients) to give feedback, and if you receive a ranking, treat it as a tool for self-improvement and transparency. Medical professionals are also encouraged to **publicly endorse the principles of reform**: for instance, consider writing op-eds or journal articles on the need for balancing monitoring with compassion, or highlight how the current system's lack of transparency hinders care (many doctors privately acknowledge this issue[66]). By aligning with P4HR's values of evidence-based practice and human-centric care, you help push the entire field of aerospace medicine forward. The call to action for you is to ensure that the “*medicine*” in aeromedical certification is practiced with integrity and free of undue external pressures. P4HR seeks to create a network of allied clinicians who can serve as trusted providers in a reformed system – join us in making that a reality.

## Policy Makers and Regulators

*Enact and endorse the necessary changes.* To members of Congress, staffers, and FAA officials: P4HR asks for your leadership to **institutionalize reform**. If you are a lawmaker, please consider supporting the Pilots for HIMS Reform Act of 2026 or related amendments – your backing can translate grassroots momentum into statutory mandate. We urge you to hold hearings, ask tough questions of the FAA about the HIMS program's data and outcomes, and ensure accountability is built into the law. For those in the FAA and DOT: take these concerns seriously and act with urgency. The FAA's mission is to provide the safest aerospace system in the world, and that must include the mental health system for pilots. P4HR calls on regulators to **work collaboratively** with our experts to update guidance and eliminate policies shown to be harmful or ineffective. For example, consider immediately suspending the lifetime monitoring rule and replacing it with a case-by-case evaluation standard grounded in medical evidence[4]. Regulators can also create advisory committees with pilot representatives (including from P4HR) to continually review the HIMS program. The *Mental Health in Aviation Act of 2025* was a start (focusing on education and stigma), but as P4HR noted, it was a “*Band-Aid on a gaping wound*” if it left core issues untouched[60]. We need you to go further. The call to action is: **use your authority to implement reforms that protect both safety and rights**. Embrace independent oversight,

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demand transparency from program contractors, and modernize the FAA's approach in line with current science. P4HR stands ready to provide data, testimonies, and draft policy language to assist. With your leadership, we can save careers – and possibly lives – while still upholding the highest safety standards.

## Allies, Advocates, and the Public

*Support the movement for safer, fairer skies.* Finally, P4HR appeals to anyone who may not fit into the above categories but cares about aviation safety, mental health, or justice. If you are a family member of a pilot, a passenger who values a safe cockpit, or an advocate for labor or mental health rights, you have a role too. You can **support P4HR's work directly** – consider making a donation to help fund our research and advocacy (as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, P4HR relies on donations to sustain initiatives like the Voices survey encryption and legal support for pilots). You can also amplify the message: follow P4HR on social media and share our updates, write to your local news outlets about this issue, or simply discuss it in your community to raise awareness that even pilots face mental health challenges that need sensible handling. For those with specialized skills (legal, tech, communications) who want to volunteer, P4HR welcomes your help in areas from data analysis to outreach campaigns. The public's voice matters in influencing policymakers – when constituents show they care about an issue, officials listen. By showing public concern for how pilots are treated, you help create a climate where reform is seen as not only a niche professional issue, but a broadly supported cause. Remember that at its heart, this is about people who hold immense responsibility for others' lives being treated fairly and allowed to care for their own health. It resonates with basic American values of fairness and second chances. So, our call to you is: **stand with P4HR** in calling for a system that is “*honest, transparent, and just*”<sup>[67]</sup>. Write that letter, post that tweet, attend that local aviation safety forum – let it be known that the status quo is not acceptable to the flying public.

In conclusion, P4HR's rallying cry is that “*the time to act is now*”<sup>[68]</sup>. The movement has begun, and progress is underway, but sustained engagement from all stakeholders is critical to reach the finish line. We cannot afford to lose talented pilots to flawed processes, nor can we tolerate a system that drives problems into hiding. By answering this call to action, you are contributing to a future in which every pilot who needs help can get it without destroying their career, and every passenger can fly knowing the crew is supported to be at their healthiest and sharpest. **P4HR invites you to join this cause** – for the sake of our pilots, our skies, and the integrity of aviation itself. Together, let's secure a *fair path forward* for those who keep us flying safely<sup>[69]</sup>.



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## Archive Links

P4HR Act of 2026

PDF: <https://web.archive.org/web/20260126215456/https://pilotsforhimsreform.org/files/P4HR%20Act%20of%202026.pdf>

P4HR Website (Our Team + full

site): <https://web.archive.org/web/20260126215558/https://pilotsforhimsreform.org/?page=our-team.html>

Reuters Article (via Insurance Journal

syndication): <https://web.archive.org/web/20260126222403/https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/international/2025/12/03/849736.htm>

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