

*Dedicated to the Advancement of the International Helicopter Community*

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**Helicopter Association International Names James A. Viola  
as President and CEO**

*Alexandria, Va. (January 6, 2020)* – The Board of Directors of Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to name James A. Viola as the organization’s next president and CEO effective Jan. 16, 2020. Viola replaces Matthew S. Zuccaro, who announced his retirement last fall.

Viola most recently served as director of General Aviation (GA) Safety Assurance for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). In this role, he oversaw 78 Flight Standards District Offices (FSDOs) and 2,500 employees across the United States and was responsible for maintaining consistency and standardization in the application of safety oversight activities for the GA community. Additionally, he ensured stakeholder and public needs were met quickly and efficiently and was responsible for starting the US Helicopter Safety Team (USHST), serving as the initial government co-chair.

“When Matt announced his retirement, the board knew that replacing him would be no easy task. We had to find a dynamic, innovative CEO who has both vision and passion,” says Jan Becker, HAI’s board chair. “We sought someone able to take up the challenge of leading HAI forward to meet the needs of a globally changing industry. With Jim, we found that leader, as well as one who understands and supports HAI’s safety values.

Viola’s three-to-five year vision for HAI encompasses a strategic plan for member service initiatives. It also acknowledges the ongoing dynamic changes throughout vertical-lift aviation, including unmanned aircraft systems, and the contributions of industry manufacturers and suppliers.

“Under Jim’s stewardship, HAI will see growth in international outreach to our membership, along with efforts to support the vertical-lift industry around the world,” concluded Becker. “The HAI Board of Directors are tremendously excited that Jim is joining us to work on behalf of our members.”

Viola’s aviation career began with the US Army, with the majority of his flying done as a special operations MH-6 and MH-47 helicopter pilot. He rose through a series of posts of increasing responsibility, achieving the rank of colonel. His final military assignment was as division chief, Army Aviation for Current Operations, where he determined and recommended the aviation unit station, prioritization, and optimization of 4,200 army aircraft, 100 manned units, and the combat rotation plan to Iraq and Afghanistan. He left the army in 2008 to work for the FAA, where he again progressed through positions of increasing responsibility.

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A strong advocate for GA, Viola flies his American General AG-5B Tiger airplane as often as he can. He holds airline transport pilot ratings for helicopters and airplanes and is a dual-rated certificated flight instructor who holds an endorsement for Special Federal Aviation Regulation 73 for Robinson R22 and R44 helicopters. He has accumulated more than 6,000 flight hours, which includes 1,100 with night-vision goggles. Viola holds three master's degrees and is a member of the Army Aviation Association of America (Quad A), the Military Officers Association of America, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and the Aircraft Pilots and Owners Association.

"I am grateful to the Board of Directors for selecting me to take up Matt's role in promoting the international vertical lift industry," says Viola. "Matt's unwavering advocacy for safe flight of all kinds made him a pleasure to work with while I was with the FAA. I look forward to continuing his legacy of HAI advocacy for safety."

"I think HAI's membership and the helicopter industry will find Jim is the ideal person to lead HAI," says Zuccaro. "You've got a Chinook driver who understands the safety and regulatory issues facing our industry, as well as the capacity to effect change where and when it is needed. I am proud to leave this organization in Jim's hands."

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*HAI is the professional trade association for the civil helicopter industry. HAI's members represent more than 3,000 aviation businesses and individuals, and safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.*