

2021 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

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1) Nationwide, EMS is facing a serious workforce shortage. What role can NAEMT play in helping EMS agencies retain their personnel?

The strength of collective action will be vital as the EMS community continues to navigate the growing workforce shortage. NAEMT must continue to be a leader in advocacy, education, learning, information sharing, provider wellness, public affairs, and planning for the future.

Advocacy: NAEMT has workforce advocacy positions that include protecting the health and safety of the EMS responders, supporting equitable compensation for EMS professionals, accurately counting EMS professionals, and promoting personal resiliency. Regulatory and legislative advancements in these areas are important for the retention of EMS professionals. NAEMT should continue to develop and coordinate advocacy for proposals for regulatory flexibility, provider safety, workforce enhancement funding, and ensuring EMS responders receive the medical treatment and benefits they need. While some of these topics may also be addressed at the local level, federal action can be a critical component, especially as our nation continues to grapple with COVID-19 and natural disasters.

Learning, Education, Information Sharing, and Recognizing Excellence: EMS workforce shortages are having different impacts on different communities and these communities are responding with a multitude of retention approaches. We in the EMS community can learn from what our colleagues have done in other places and NAEMT should continue facilitating education, information, and best practice sharing. NAEMT policymaking will be informed by learning from EMS professionals about what would be valuable in retention. NAEMT's award programs that recognize excellence can highlight retention strategies as best practices. The member benefits/discounts made available to members by NAEMT and private enterprises, through NAEMT membership, are also of value.

Provider Wellness: An inadequately-sized workforce and the toll of COVID-19 and natural disasters on the physical and mental health of EMS responders is having an impact. Awareness must be communicated and resources made available to ensure EMS responders in need of assistance receive that assistance. NAEMT education and information sharing is focused on helping EMS responders manage stress and anxiety. Solutions could be local or regional and NAEMT can be part of the support network that facilitates their development. NAEMT and the EMS community must also cope with our losses. We must honor and remember those EMS responders who have died in the line of duty.

Public Affairs: First responders have long-established themselves as community heroes. But, with the competition for attention in the cluttered media world, our EMS community heroes can get lost in the crowded public affairs landscape. Alongside the tragedy of the pandemic and other disasters is the opportunity to respectfully make the public aware that of the on-going dedication and sacrifice of EMS responders and the circumstances leading to people leaving the EMS field, which must be addressed.

Preparing for the Future:

Advocacy, education, and public affairs around expanding the role of EMS providers in the health care system can be an important retention opportunity. EMS providers have shown how much they can do to improve the health of communities through Mobile Integrated Health Care initiatives. Creating new career pathways for EMS professionals can be a rewarding retention and recruitment opportunity.

2) Define what you believe are the key characteristics of good leadership and describe the leadership qualities that you would bring to the position for which you are running.

The NAEMT Board of Directors sets policy, provides guidance, and holds oversight to help the Association achieve its mission. Guided by the NAEMT values and vision, the leadership of the Board provides the framework for the Executive Director and staff to advance the day-to-day operations of the Association.

A Board member must be passionate about the mission of the Association. From the day that I earned my first aid merit badge as a Scout, there was never a doubt that emergency medical services would be a passion. As my engagement in EMS evolved, so did my passion for leadership, excellence, innovation, and change.

Board members must be excellent listeners and life-long learners and I consider myself both. NAEMT represents a broad and diverse membership. It is the collective experiences and needs of that membership that must guide the Board in their governance role. I am privileged to have experience working with volunteer, commercial, and municipal EMS services so that I bring a comprehensive understanding to the Board of Directors.

I have played an executive leadership role in three quality EMS organizations. I have held regional and statewide governance positions in EMS, culminating in two terms as Chair of the NYS EMS Council. I have served on numerous not-for-profit Boards, including the Board of a hospital. These experiences have helped me build a solid foundation in both executive and governance leadership. It is vital that a Board member understand the strategic role of the Board and tactical leadership role of management, and the difference between the two. I believe my Board experience would make me a valuable member of the NAEMT Board.

I am a firm proponent of innovation and change in EMS and believe my experience in this area will make me an asset to the Board during this dynamic time. NAEMT has the opportunity to have a seat at the table for health system change. There is an old saying, if you don't have a seat at the table, you may end up being the meal.

The Board has fiduciary responsibility for the Association and I have executive and governance level experience in overseeing the finances of multi-million-dollar trade associations.

Leading NAEMT requires consensus building. The Board of Directors is undoubtedly faced with many situations that will require the melding of different perspectives to arrive at the best possible outcome for the membership. I pride myself on being a consensus builder. I enjoy working through complex problems in collaboration with others to arrive at the best possible solution.

Representation and advocacy are key to NAEMT's success. Having spent a good part of my career as a congressional lobbyist, I am uniquely positioned to guide and contribute to NAEMT's advocacy success.

Talking about myself to answer this question has been an interesting experience. I prefer to work hard and let my work speak for itself. That said, it is my pleasure to be a candidate for the NAEMT Board of Directors and I would be proud to serve, if elected.

3) One of NAEMT's core values stat that the association "shall conduct all aspects of our business with integrity and transparency, and adhere to the ethical standards of our profession." What does that mean to you? Describe how you will work as a member of the NAEMT Board to safeguard this value.

Those given the privilege to lead, must lead by example. For me it started as a youth when my parents taught me to treat others in the manner that you want to be treated and that honesty is the best policy. Those two statements are guiding principle that have been with me throughout life and manifest themselves within my professional activities.

With regards to integrity, Thomas Jefferson is reported to have said, "whenever you do a thing, act as if the whole world is watching." One who is given the responsibility to represent others does not succeed by placing him/herself first. Discussion and decisions must be fair, transparent, and in the best interests of those who are represented.

Former U.S. Senator Alan K. Simpson, a man for whom I hold admiration, once said' "If you have integrity, nothing else matters. If you don't have integrity, nothing else matters." That pretty much sums up my feeling on adhering to the ethical standards of our profession.

The Board of Directors of NAEMT has an obligation to the mission, values, and vision of the organization. It has an obligation to the Bylaws. It has an obligation to lead by example. It has an obligation to lead in a transparent manner. That is what can be expected from me if I am selected to serve on the NAEMT Board of Directors.

4) How would you present the value proposition of NAEMT membership to prospective members?

A strong and vibrant NAEMT can help lead our profession. EMS is strengthened when we act as a community. Strengthened as a profession for individual EMTs and Paramedics and strengthened for our agencies. NAEMT is a place where we can learn, converse with our peers, and advocate for the changes that will strengthen our profession.

There is more than one way to look at the value proposition. For some, being part of the collective and networking is important. For others, NAEMT will be a place where they can achieve something through education and learning. Fortunately, NAEMT can deliver on this value proposition from both perspectives.

NAEMT has been able to keep the dues cost low and create considerable content for members that comes without additional fees or expense. Fee-for-service programming is delivered at reasonable costs. This certainly supports the value proposition.

NAEMT has achieved concrete federal advocacy results that speak to the organization's value in both real dollars and public policy. NAEMT also creates value through collaboration with other state and federal EMS associations.

NAEMT is engaged in national policy discussions about the settings where people will receive their health care. COVID-19 has accelerated a long-term shift of consumer preferences that shows people want care in the place of their choosing at the time that is most convenient. The use of telemedicine and treat-at-home will surely increase going forward. Importantly, insurers are exhibiting a willingness to establish broader and more regular payment to EMS for telemedicine encounters and alternate destination transportation. NAEMT is a leader in discussions of treat-at-home and alternate destinations and provides a logical convening place to encourage policy thinking around programs that engage EMS providers in new care models to advance value-based care that encompasses mobile integrated health care concepts.

The NAEMT leaders and staff have built solid policy, education, communications, and advocacy foundations. They have adjusted each of these programs to a reality that required the continuation of our agenda without being able to be together in the same place.

If elected, I pledge to add my talents and join this outstanding team and dedicate my time and energy to overcoming our challenges and capitalizing on our strengths to advance the EMS profession and demonstrate the value of the Association.

Thank you.