



2022 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

Please include your response below each question. Please limit each answer to 500 words or less. Thanks.

Candidate: **Christopher Way**

Questions for 2022 Election Candidates

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

I think there are a few good attributes a leader must possess. You must have passion for what you do, be a good communicator, willing to listen, open to risk, focus on and build relationships, open to innovation and change, have vision and have a positive attitude. I feel that my two strongest attributes that I bring to the NAEMT Board (if chosen to continue to serve as Treasurer) are my passion for EMS and my ability to build relationships. I have been involved in EMS since I was 16 years old. It has been my only career and I truly believe that I am lucky to be fulfilling my dream to be involved in emergency services. I have never wanted to do anything different, nor have I regretted my chosen path. I still have the same passion for what I do and feel incredibly fortunate to feel that way! I also think I build and maintain very strong relationships which is critical to NAEMT's success. I do not think any of us (individual, discipline, organization) can accomplish what we need to accomplish alone. The only way we are going to continue to make a difference and even grow our influence is to enhance our current relationships and create new ones.

2. What do you believe are the top issues facing the EMS profession right now, and what role should NAEMT play in addressing these issues?

There are four significant problems facing the EMS community as a whole right now. First and foremost, I think we are seeing an unprecedented shortage of EMS professionals that has gotten significantly worse after the COVID-19 pandemic. NAEMT must be creative, both legislatively and educationally, in creating new avenues to attract people to join us! Secondly, EMS MUST

become an essential service in all 50 states. If we aren't considered important people will not listen to our woes! Next, I think we need to champion our own profession! We can not play the victim or spend our energy feeling sorry for ourselves! We have to breakdown our internal barriers and focus on the citizens we serve. We need to not focus on the delivery model chosen, rather let's focus on putting energy and resource in to the chosen delivery model. Finally, I think we need meaningful advocacy; we need real solutions to EMS payment reform, significant grant programs and inclusion in the healthcare system.

3. With additional stress on an already overburdened workforce, what steps can NAEMT take to support the health, wellbeing and resilience of our EMS practitioners?

Mental health and wellness has got to become a bigger focus in our profession. It is not enough to say it's a problem we have to have profound action to back it up. There is not a single solution. On the advocacy side we must get legislators to recognize the importance of this issue. Some have but it needs to be all sides and at the federal and state level. We also must begin to educate our providers from the minute they enter the profession about the importance of good mental health and how to keep balanced and how to pay attention to trouble and how to get help if needed. Finally, these steps only work if there are resources to get people the help they need. A broken mental health system is not going to help our broken EMS providers. Developing or partnering on a proven system of care specific to what we do can be successful and there are great examples of how to do this!

4. How would you explain the value of NAEMT membership to both prospective members and existing members?

The answer to this question totally depends on the prospective member. What I have found as the Chair of the NAEMT Membership Committee is that the membership is very diverse (career/volunteer, field provider/manager, EMT/Paramedic, Third Service/Fire Based/Hospital Based/Private, etc.) and because of that people are joining NAEMT for a variety of reasons. For ANY prospective member I would tell them that the advocacy that NAEMT does is worth the price of membership alone. There is no other professional organization with a sole focus on EMS that does as much advocacy for not only EMS agencies but the provider as well. That said, I think then you must get to the individual level and really learn more about the prospective member to know why NAEMT membership will benefit them. All members find value from some of the defined benefits (i.e. \$10,000 life insurance) but certain members find great value in different benefits. For example, someone that has to purchase their own uniforms may be very excited about the various discounts from uniform vendors while others find great importance in the travel benefits. I really believe that is why NAEMT has worked so diligently to have a wide-ranging membership benefits package.