



## 2022 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

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

**Candidate:** David S. Blevins

### 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.
  - a. Using the terms of textbooks, I believe that the components of servant leadership are necessary for the profession of EMS. There are four main principles identified in servant leadership. Those principles are being encouraging and developing an atmosphere of encouraging divergent and diverse discussion and thought that would allow for moving things out of the area of the way that we have always done things. Next, creating a culture of trust. Having participated with many leaders in our profession, it is not a thought of if somebody is going to do bad, it is when. We have seen the advancement of several professions based on the trust in their employees to do the right thing even when nobody is looking. We should continue to build and trust our healthcare practitioners and trust them to do the right thing and treat them well and they will take care of the service. This also considers that when somebody does do something right, you need to discipline that individual even if they are a high performer because if you fail to do so, it will foster a good ole boys' mentality and degrade that trust. Next, have an unselfish mindset. If somebody has a great idea, implement the idea, and give the individual credit for it. Additionally, use that to develop new ideas within your profession. Is a change needed for an aspect of operations, give them the ability to develop and present it with the thought that it may make a significant impact in the care of our patients. Lastly, and building on the last topic, foster and develop leadership in our practitioners. Empower and impassion your employees to do better and provide them opportunities to take classes that may seem beyond them as it will start to develop them into the NEXTGEN leaders that we need to continue the development of our field.

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?
  - a. **Staffing and Retention:** Addressed in a little more detail below, NAEMT has started the process by helping agency leadership with information about recruitment in the profession to help guide advances in the procedures. NAEMT can continue this initiative by added a retention document as well. If an agency is unable to identify and correct a negative churn rate in employees, it will never be able to recruit enough practitioners in the field. Furthermore, working with experts in the area of employee burnout, and help EMS leadership and employees understand and be able to identify what are the key indicators, and how to aid those individuals that may be experiencing those symptoms.
  - b. **Education:** In watching other professions in healthcare, the continuation of educational development has aided in the enhancement of their profession. The common discussion is around degrees versus non-degree, certificate or in-house and many others. The problem is that when disagreement occurs, people/organizations have dug their heels in and developed conversation about why this shouldn't happen. NAEMT is in a position that they have great relationships with all possible decision makers in this area to bring together a round-table on what should be included, or what should be considered to keep the process moving forward. Stalling and killing the conversation will prevent the enhancement of our practitioners.
  - c. **EMS Overuse/Misuse:** This is a key area that is resulting in some of the issue that is addressed above. The census count of calls that are facing our providers are increasing dramatically and our crews are taking additional patients to the hospital and then facing increased wall-time within the hospitals as they are facing issues with staffing and available beds. The NAEMT has the ability to work with federal legislators about the expansion of ET3 style programs that will allow the transport of patients to primary care physicans, urgent care centers, triage and treat in place. Additionally, they can work with key stakeholders to model those to states that have state insurance programs, and also reach out to private insurers to show how various programs will work to create good patient care, and save funds overall.
  - d. **Changing messaging on Recruitment and Retention:** A lot of recruitment and retention is built around the messaging of lights and sirens and critical medicine in traumatic or medical patients. Changing the face of the EMS profession to show that the amount of calls are associated with taking care of non-critical patients may set expectations correctly. NAEMT could include in their materials to ensure that all NAEMT materials are expressing the conversation about setting expectations to current employees and prospective employees so they set the limits accurately.
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?

- a. The National Association of EMTs is uniquely positioned to be a continued advocate for the EMS profession in all arenas that are required. As identified above, there are a couple of key items that are facing EMS in our profession. First and foremost is the current status of EMS practitioners in the United States. As with healthcare, EMS providers have left the profession for other opportunities. During the pandemic, EMS has been identified as a key component of the healthcare profession; however, the practitioners are working a greater number of hours for the same pay as even before the pandemic was an issue. Prior to the pandemic, a doctoral candidate, funded through the Georgia Trauma Foundation, wrote the Georgia EMS Workforce Study. The ideals of that study are still being stated by EMS professionals today, and the NAEMT can work with key stakeholders to determine ways to improve.
  - b. The NAEMT has completed a recruitment guide earlier this year with methods to attract new candidates to the profession. Now that the guide is out, continuing to bring the discussion to the forefront, provide content material that would help smaller agencies recruit, also the NAEMT can work to develop a retention guide of similar solutions. Recruiting by itself will not stop the issue if professionals keep leaving. The easiest point to bring up on retention is funding/pay; however, in reality, retention is a grouping of related items such as “being treated as a professional” or “getting off duty on time” (examples from the EMS Workforce Study). The referenced items are very vague, therefore it would be beneficial to further develop research to exam what retention techniques are valid and how to disseminate those to service leadership across the county.
4. How would you explain the value of NAEMT membership to both prospective members and existing members?
- a. There are certainly three key areas that NAEMT bring to the table in regards existing members and prospective members. To begin with, the educational content that the NAEMT brings is expansive and will work to expand the knowledge skills and abilities of our providers. With the increase of violent encounters of our professionals NAEMT has TECC and TCCC courses available, or pediatrics and geriatrics call volumes they have EPC and the Geriatric Emergency Care are available. NAEMT works hard to keep their educational content updated with the latest evidence-based content with advanced changes seen in areas such as PHTLS and others.
  - b. Working to advance a profession such as EMS takes a significant amount of advocacy and investment. The work conducted behind the scenes by the staff, the board, and the committees of the NAEMT continues to build EMS. In multiple conversations with local, state, and federal decision makers, there are many that still are not sure what EMS does, and the work being done by the NAEMT is working to make sure that those individuals are educated and informed about what EMS does to help drive what is available in the future.

Additionally, the NAEMT gives its members an opportunity to serve on one or more committees and have taken those members recommendations and I have witnessed those items being transformed into action items that have made an impact on the field.

- c. Lastly, and the most fiscally advantageous for the members is the availability of discounts of items that are of interest to its members. When comparing the membership fees to the discounts, use of just 1 or more of the discount opportunities will return that fee. From access to conference content with a significant discount, members have access to top content at their to continue being lifelong learners.