



2022 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

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

Candidate: Garrett Hedeem

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?

For me the key characteristics of good leadership revolve around the ability to listen, paying the most attention to those at the “tip of the spear.” In my experience as the union president for the largest EMS union in our state I have brought the voice of the people to administration in many ways. I have frequent face to face meetings, engage members in discussions on private internet forums, and survey providers frequently on important issues we face day-to-day. I attempt to listen far more than I ever speak so that I can best represent everyone in these important discussions.

In my first adventure in graduate school I took a lean process improvement course that stressed the importance of “going to Gemba.” Gemba was the Japanese word that represented “those who do the work,” and further represented the importance of listening to those who are at the backbone of any operation. Somewhat like simply observing and listening is having the ability to lead by example, able to “jump in the muck” at a moment notice and do the work that needs to be done. A great leader never gets too far from the front line, never forgetting where they came from. While I primarily am an agency leader now, I still routinely work as a field paramedic, and I know how brown the muck is.

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?

The workforce shortages seen around the country are among the top issues facing the profession currently. It has become challenging to do the primary role of the profession due to the historic levels of workforce shortages. Advocating for better pay and benefits and training for strong agency leadership are key areas where NAEMT can play a role in addressing these issues.

Better pay and benefits will come with continued advocacy for enhanced reimbursements for transport and advocating for alternative reimbursement mechanisms like alternate destination or treat in place.

There is a shortage of quality leadership education in EMS in the United States. NAEMT should continue to advocate for both formal degree education attainment and quality continuing and informal leadership education.

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?

NAEMT already has a wonderful collection of Mental health resources available, in addition to new courses in Mental Health resiliency (which I helped in its development and beta testing for) they already have a good framework. Some areas in which we could improve are currently being worked on at the board level. This includes vetting substance-use disorder and mental health treatment centers specifically designed for the first responder.

As someone who has used mental health resources in the past I know that finding the right counselor or therapist can make or break one's progress. I was lucky enough to find one that was an EMT in college and had trauma counseling training, but many are not as lucky. Advocating for counseling and utilization other resiliency trainings and tools, sharing success stories along the way will help address the stress present in the workplace.

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

While there are many specialized EMS advocacy organizations that do a great job, representing different provider-types, labor-based, management-based, owner-based, or clinical specialty-based, NAEMT remains the only one who represents “all the above.” Along with its globally unmatched array of quality continuing education, NAEMT’s membership-based advocacy initiatives like EMS on the Hill Day and online Legislative Service help put local leaders in the front of EMS advocacy.

While the value of the previous items are harder to calculate, NAEMT also brings tangible benefits like car rental and hotel discounts, apparel and other swag like 5.11 and flying cross discounts, and plenty of other educational discounts, including a \$125 discount to EMS World Expo!

Some of the ways we can further promote NAEMT is by having a larger presence at a variety of industry gatherings. We need to be at every affiliate state association’s state conference, every national EMS conference, most large fire conferences, and some of the larger emergency physician or nursing conferences to simply let everyone know we exist and provide a great voice for the industry and promote collaboration with other national professional organizations.