



## 2022 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

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

**Candidate: Matt Zavadsky, At-Large Director Candidate**

### 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.

**Vision** - the ability to see the big picture of where NAEMT, and the EMS profession, is headed, what we're capable of, and what it will take to get there. In my 42 years in this profession, I have not seen the dramatic changes and challenges facing EMS today. My current involvement with NAEMT and its committees, as well as actively pushing the EMS agency I work with to new services and roles for EMS, has provided keen insights into what EMS **CAN** and **SHOULD** do to bring more value to the healthcare system, local communities, and our patients. We've done that on many levels, but we need to keep pursuing new initiatives and services. Demonstrating value will increase funding for EMS, and higher compensation for EMS practitioners.

**Inspiration** - the ability to convey the vision to others and get them excited about it. It will take a village, the whole cadre of EMS professionals and NAEMT members, to accomplish the vision. During my time in EMS, I've helped create and deliver education to EMS practitioners, leaders, and communities on how to transform EMS service delivery, and the benefits these transformations, will create excitement at every level and inspire practitioners to communicate, demonstrate and accomplish the vision! I will continue to work tirelessly to help current, and future EMS leaders to be as excited about the future of EMS as I am!

**Strategic & Critical Thinking** – the ability to think critically about the NAEMT and the EMS profession, understand our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and how we can work to support or overcome these. Overcoming the challenges we're facing related to retention and recruitment, workplace safety and resilience and compensation for EMS practitioners, requires deliberative planning and execution.

My experience leading the EMS Transformation and Economics Committees, and successfully collaborating with other large national EMS associations, has provided me the unique ability to think critically and strategically, and execute plans to advance the EMS profession. I will continue building on that experience as Director at Large for NAEMT.

**Collaborative Spirit** – the ability to work together with others to achieve the vision. The ongoing challenges for the EMS profession, and our practitioners, has afforded NAEMT the opportunity to build relationships with leaders for other EMS associations, and crucial stakeholders such as Medicare, state Medicaid agencies, payers, public health agencies, healthcare providers and elected and appointed officials. I've taken a very active role in developing those relationships to advance the EMS profession at the local, state and federal level, and continue those efforts to continually find ways to work together to mutually benefit all our collaborative stakeholders.

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?

**Practitioner Resiliency** – EMS practitioners are leaving the profession in droves. This places an incredible burden on those remaining in the profession. We need to create an environment in which current EMS professionals **WANT** to stay in the profession, and others want to join us. Compensation, workplace safety, and the overall development and expansion of the services we provide, may help stop the exodus of EMS professionals and attract new members for our profession. NAEMT's new resiliency programs are a phenomenal start, but we need to broaden the base of knowledge and tools to help EMS professionals and leaders manage the stressors created by the role we play in the healthcare, public safety, and public health systems.

**EMS Education** – Ask many EMS agency leaders and they will tell you that the initial education for EMTs and paramedics is not adequately preparing people to be successful in this noble profession. Data from the National Registry related to first time pass rates for the EMT and paramedic exams seem to support this fact. Additionally, the current accreditation requirement for paramedic training programs have forced many educational programs to fold. NAEMT needs to collaborate with the education community to completely reform the initial education process to better prepare students for success, not only in attaining certification, but more importantly, for the realities of the current and evolving role of EMS in the future. NAEMT also should enhance their offering of continuing education that is relevant and pertinent to the changing role of EMS delivery. As a still practicing EMT on ambulances and special service units, I continue to have first-hand experience in the real challenges of field work and will use this experience to drive change.

**EMS Economics** – One of the reasons EMS professionals are not able to be compensated appropriately for the services we provide is that the EMS economic model is wrong. It is not based on the value of the care we deliver, but the miles that we drive. Transforming the fundamental economic model and **PROVING** the difference we make for our patients and our communities, will create different funding streams, ones which will allow EMS professionals to be compensated more appropriately.

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?

**For EMS Professionals** – NAEMT should build on our current Mental Health Resilience Officer (MHRO) course and offer resiliency education and tools for the **EMS professional**. Teaching them how to survive and **THRIVE** in this profession. How to effectively manage dynamic schedules which results in time away from family and friends during crucial events, interpersonal relationships with diverse coworkers, other responders and healthcare professionals, and leaders of EMS agencies. How to deal with the impact of death and dying, mental health patients, and the dangers of the profession. How to effectively identify the signs of stress and seek resources to manage that stress to prevent depression and suicide.

**For EMS Agency Leaders** – Create education and programs to teach agency leaders how to create a better *environment* for the EMS professional to manage the stress of their chosen career. The MHRO course is a great start, but EMS agency leaders could benefit from a toolkit to implement programs designed to identify professionals who are struggling with both on, and off the job stresses. Peer support programs, flexible schedules, supportive management styles, and even personal finance training are just a few examples of the things that employers can do to create a more employee-focused agency, one that encourages longevity in the profession, and with the agency.

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

For nearly 50 years, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians has been steadfastly promoting the advancement of the EMS profession, and EMS professionals. Through education and advocacy, NAEMT has helped assure EMS professionals are well educated to deliver lifesaving, and community health services to the communities and patients they serve.

Educational programs such as PHTLS, AMLS, TCCC, MHRO and Community Paramedicine, not only provide fundamental and cutting-edge emerging education on the foundational and transformative role EMS and its practitioners provide, but set the course for the future of EMS.

NAEMT's advocacy role promotes national, state, and local regulations and policies that foster a safe environment for EMS professionals, assures adequate financial reimbursement for the services they provide, and promotes the EMS profession for current and potential EMS professionals.

As a member of NAEMT, EMS professionals, and others who support the EMS profession, demonstrate their support for the mission and vision of EMS systems and professionals nationally and internationally.