



2022 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

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

Candidate: Melissa McNally, Region II Director

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.

Leadership can be defined as “the action of leading a group of people or organization.” It is quite possible if you were to list “traits of a leader” many of us would identify some of the same qualities. However, leadership should be less about the identity of the role, and more about the impact the leader has on others. Being a good leader means exemplifying the role even when faced with complex challenges or hurdles. An organization with good leadership will engage members to work to the best of their ability, will increase recruitment and retention, and subsequently provide an exceptional product. A leader should have competency and be of good character because the integrity and reputation of an organization is judged by those entrusted to execute the organization’s mission.

In doing a self-assessment of my leadership qualities, I think one needs to not only look at the accomplishments and successes, but at the mistakes. I also think you need to be able to set goals as you move forward. I think what truly makes an organization successful is that fact that everyone brings their own style. I believe that depending on the task, certain characteristics demand a certain leadership style. I have spent most of my career focused on patient care. Over the last couple years, my focus has evolved to finding different ways to provide patient care through the EMS Transformation. Through these efforts I have fostered relationships with not only patients, but with other care providers. I have had the opportunity to help patients engage in the activation of their own health as well as help identify barriers to access to care. I have strived to create a “vision of healthcare”; one not bound by the walls of a health system. An opportunity not only innovate, but to a champion change. These are some of the characteristics that I believe I could bring to NAEMT in the pursuit of fulfilling their core mission and values.

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?

If we know anything, we know that the EMS system faces multiple challenges. Payer and billing compliance, workforce shortages, training constraints, provider burnout, and mental illness stand between our boots on the ground providers. It has become increasingly difficult to work within the confines of these barriers in our health systems while still providing competent care to our patients. NAEMT has the ability to seek answers to these challenges.

As we evolve in the new healthcare realm it is important that we focus on improving our providers. When we invest our efforts in education and training, we have the opportunity to evoke a change in the EMS system. When we provide value to our providers, we will be able to recruit and retain our Paramedics and EMTs. When we educate them professionally, we make innovative providers who seek ways to fund and deliver patient centered care. Most importantly, as we push EMS into the integrated healthcare space we will find ways to resolve reimbursement issues and expand performance payment models. This doesn't come without its own challenges. Providers who are going to be successful in the new system will require a higher level of training. Unfortunately, the financial outlook for the career isn't equally matched to the desire for higher education. The providers who I worked beside were the best in the field, and most did not have a college degree. But, to become better, we need to train at the next level; in order to provide patients with entire continuum of care.

Closer to home we know in 2020 the federal government declared a national emergency which caused our first responder workforces to combat a global pandemic that had resulted in an alarming reduction of EMS patients as well as those patients seeking treatment in our emergency departments all while dragging the global economy into a recession. Agencies were facing fiscal strains on personnel, equipment, supplies, and PPE. One of the most important activities that NAEMT can carry out is to continue to develop strong grass-root advocacy programs across the country. NAEMT needs to engage local, state, and federal policy makers, making them aware of the issues that are crucial to sustaining emergency medical services following the post COVID crisis.

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?

Our providers are faced each day with mitigating complex patient emergencies in our communities and health systems. These low frequency, but highly complex emergencies can be compounded by workforce strains, long scene hours, and a sense of invulnerability similar to those who survive these disasters. Often time we forget the need of the caregiver because we are so trained to being the one that individuals look to in some of the worse times of their lives. We are that critical link in the chain whether its patient care or holding the dying hand of someone's family member. Having a barrier of defense is the most basic coping mechanism for responders. It might be days, months or even years later before the sights, sounds and smells remind them of the day they will never forget. Responders unconsciously form an attachment with other first responders because of bond branded by the same trauma. It is because of this that I believe this agency has a responsibility to ensure that services are available whether that be training, ensuring program support or resources, or provider connections to culturally competent mental health professionals who understand what our first responders need. It is essential that they have a understanding and interest in the workforce we serve.

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

As an industry professional, it is important to join a professional organization. Many times, individuals focus on the personal cost; one of time commitment or money. NAEMT like many other professional organizations offer professional pricing on insurance, hotel and travel discounts, as well as various other entertainment discounts. Most know the various learning opportunities that NAEMT provides; offering lectures, webinars, certifications, and other various education channels for industry professionals. It provides avenues for providers to stay up to date on the latest trends, hot topics, and research. What most don't know is that it is motivational. No matter if you are just starting your EMS career or whether you are a seasoned professional joining an organization, like NAEMT, provides an opportunity for an individual to be a brand ambassador for their profession. It can be inspiring to see what others are doing in their own organizations as well as be inspired by other individuals across the country. As we come off the tail of a pandemic, our healthcare workforce is looking for ways to reinvigorate their passion. Being part of an organization like NAEMT allows one to reconnect to the culture, look for new ways to invest yourself, or provide an opportunity to be a mentor, or to find one. It provides the benefit of learning from someone who has been on the job for years or allows you to share your expertise to those just entering the profession.