



2022 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

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

Candidate: Robert Luckritz

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.

Being a good leader means understanding the needs of those you are leading, and advocating for the tools they need to be successful. As NAEMT looks to be recognized as a leader in the EMS profession, it is critical that the board remain in touch with those individuals that are on the front lines providing care to the public in these trying times. As a leader in my organization, I work hard to ensure that I spend time with providers and hear from them what issues are facing them. I challenge other leaders to step out of their echo chamber of fellow leaders and consider the impact of our decisions on those that are providing front line care.

A leader of NAEMT must also understand and value diversity. We represent EMS providers from across the country, with differing needs, priorities, and viewpoints. As a national organization, we must consider the issues that are facing all providers, not just those from where we individually come from. My career has blessed me with experience both in the northeast and the south, and I have had the opportunity to serve in the non-profit, private, and government sectors of EMS delivery. During my time on the board, I have consistently challenged fellow board members to consider the perspectives of all providers and evaluate the impacts and potential perceptions of our decisions by all providers, regardless of location or delivery model.

As an attorney, I truly believe in the value of dissent. I have been educated to consistently look for and value an alternate viewpoint on an issue, regardless of whether I agree with that viewpoint. I believe that ability has been a large part of my success as an NAEMT board member. It has positioned me to challenge all the decisions that we make and ensure that we understand, or at least acknowledge all sides of an issue before we execute a decision.

Likewise, this same ability has helped me be a consensus builder, bringing together diverse viewpoints and working past strongly held opinions to find common ground in our mission.

Finally, I believe that a successful NAEMT board member must have adequate experience to be a good steward for the organization. I am running for the position of Treasurer. Until my relocation earlier this year, I was the longest serving regional director on the board of NAEMT. I believe that my time on the board has prepared me to be a successful executive board member. I have seen both successful and unsuccessful initiatives and decisions by the board, and I take those learning experiences with me. I have worked to increase our role in industry advocacy, and most recently, as chair of the EMS Workforce committee, have worked to ensure we are keeping focus on the needs of our front-line providers.

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 greatest issue facing the EMS profession right now is undoubtedly recruitment and retention. Fewer and fewer individuals are choosing to enter the EMS profession. As an industry leader, NAEMT must partner with other professional organizations to work to determine the barriers to entry to our profession, and target individuals that may not know about EMS and the great experiences that we all have had during our careers. NAEMT must continue to tell the story of EMS, through advocacy, marketing, and public relations efforts.

As the cost of education continues to rise, we must work to provide pathways for individuals that may not have the same access to financial resources. We must advocate for funding for training and career development. It's critical that we as an industry think differently about our recruiting techniques and recognize the changing demographics in our industry.

However, I believe that retention is a greater threat to our industry than recruiting, and I believe that NAEMT can play a critical role in improving retention. EMS provider education has continued to advance and front line EMS providers now have numerous career options open to them. In order for us to retain providers, we must take a close look at our culture and leadership. The newer workforce has different standards and expectations in the workplace, and we must adapt. NAEMT needs to expand its educational offerings and industry tools to provide leaders with the information and skills to adapt. Further, we must continue to educate and mentor new leaders.

As those leaders who founded this industry 50 years ago leave the profession, there is now a leadership vacuum. We must work quickly to fill that gap with younger, aspiring leaders, and we must recognize that they may think differently than us, and that is okay. NAEMT plays a vital role in filling that gap, and we must do a better job of targeting those individuals to educate them to take leadership roles, both at EMS agencies, but also within NAEMT.

Finally, as we all recognize the need to raise wages in our industry to improve recruitment and retention, we must also recognize the other crisis facing our industry: financial sustainability. Many of these other industries are well funded and utilize different payment models, providing them with

an advantage. In order to better serve our providers, we must continue our efforts to advocate for a change in the way EMS is funded, both locally and nationally. We must advocate for funding to EMS agencies that is adequate to provide a fair wage to providers for the challenging work they perform, while still ensuring funding to provide high quality service and a healthy work environment.

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?

During my tenure on the board of NAEMT, our focus and priorities have varied. We have advocated for numerous issues, both those directly impacting our providers and those which improve the industry as a whole. However, one continued focus of the association has been on resiliency. As chair of the EMS workforce committee, I believe that we must continue to advocate for resources for front-line providers to ensure their health and wellbeing, particularly in light of the events of the past few years. I was extraordinarily proud to be a part of the development of the Mental Health Resiliency Officer course, and I believe it is just one more step and one more tool toward providing a comprehensive approach to provider wellness.

In recent times, much of our focus has been on recruitment and retention in the short term. However, provider wellness is an integral part of ensuring retention in our profession. Healthy and resilient providers are much more likely to be successful and remain in our profession. We must continue to support organizations that are providing wellness services to providers, both acutely and preventively. We should continue to provide information on best practices that organizations of all sizes can implement. We must continue to advocate for EMS inclusion in legislation to fund resiliency efforts for all public safety and healthcare providers.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a turning point for our industry. Numerous providers had altering experiences professionally, and others were critically ill, some with long-term effects. NAEMT should take the lead to understand and advocate for COVID-19 survivors in our industry. For those that put their lives on the line responding to the pandemic, we must ensure that infrastructure is put into place to care for those individuals, both physically and emotionally.

Resiliency and Wellness are critical issues facing our industry. NAEMT must ensure that we continue to focus on providing tools and resources to individuals and agencies to ensure our providers continue to be healthy and resilient. We must ensure that we are not distracted by other issues and that continue to keep this as a top priority for the organization.

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

The value of NAEMT goes beyond any material benefit that may be offered. Although NAEMT offers numerous discounts and affiliate memberships for which a dollar amount can be placed, to me, the greatest NAEMT benefits are those that are intangible. NAEMT provides a voice for providers. No

other association so broadly represents front line EMTs and Paramedics. NAEMT also works to support local associations, big and small, as we advocate for issues at the state and local level.

For years, NAEMT has been a leading advocate in our industry. Our EMS on the Hill Day has driven policy changes and opened doors as we seek out legislative and regulatory support. More and more policy makers are seeking out NAEMT for industry comment before policies are enacted. Our leverage continues to grow as we affect change through our newly created Political Action Committee, of which I was actively involved in developing. Our years of advocacy came to a head with the COVID-19 Pandemic.

NAEMT's advocacy worked to ensure funding was available for EMS providers, and provide real-time feedback to state and federal lawmakers as we navigated the crisis. Once again, this is an example of where the COVID-19 pandemic, although catastrophic to many, showed the value of EMS, and provided a catalyst to raise the profile of NAEMT.

I can't talk about membership value and COVID-19 without also highlighting the direct benefits to practitioners and agencies that NAEMT provided. Often, individuals join organizations and don't fully recognize their value until we have a time of crisis. Throughout the pandemic, NAEMT worked not just with advocacy, but also directly with providers and agencies. The collective knowledge was able to provide resources to agencies at a time when so many questions were unanswered and we were navigating uncharted waters. NAEMT also secured accommodations and other direct resources for providers during the crisis. Our prior work to build corporate partnerships for our organization and education programs came through during this crisis.

Finally, one of the greatest benefits I've seen in the organization is collaboration. Through the development of a robust international education program, NAEMT has built bridges and relationships across the globe. A membership with NAEMT unlocks an international base of industry experts. NAEMT membership is something that brings like-minded people together. In my time in NAEMT, the conversations I've had with other EMS professionals have shaped my profession. I can honestly say that were I not an NAEMT member, and met the individuals that I did, I would not have made the career choices that got to where I am today.