



2023 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

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

Candidate: _____ **Gary Peterson** _____

Questions for 2023 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.

The most essential characteristic of leadership is accountability. A leader is limited only by the level of discipline they impose upon themselves and cannot ask others what they are unable or, more often, unwilling to discipline themselves to do. I have always been inspired by the concept of “extreme ownership” described by U.S. Navy SEAL and author Jocko Willink. In his book he describes this concept as the leader being accountable not only for their own actions but personally responsible for everyone under their charge to include every error or mistake. It is the responsibility of the leader to hold the highest regard for the mission and those under their command. A leader is responsible when the team wins, and it is a reflection of their embodied leadership and character to be responsible when the team loses or when the mission fails. A leader must always ask first, what could I have done better to have equipped my team so the failure would not have happened? It is through this lens that I now look at all leaders, including myself. I try every day to hold myself to the highest level of personal accountability and self-discipline. My responsibility is the never-ending equipping and resourcing of my teams for the best possible chance of success. As the leader, the wins will always be theirs and the failures will always be mine.

2. With additional stress on an already overburdened workforce, what steps can NAEMT take to support the health, wellbeing and resilience of our EMS practitioners?

As an EMS clinician we bring our entire selves onto every call. That self is made up of physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects. It is obvious that a sick or injured EMS clinician may have sub-optimal performance. What is less known is the interdependence of these aspects; that a weakness or injury in one area of our lives can and will bring down the whole. Conversely, a strength in one area has a positive impact on all areas. The conclusion is that the optimal EMS clinician is strong in all four areas and needs strategic professional support as well. It is the responsibility of the NAEMT to collect the

latest research, and support new research, to best understand how to best support our clinicians. The NAEMT supports specialized teams and initiatives centered on these areas to share this information with EMS agencies. Moreover, the NAEMT is well-positioned to share how EMS agencies have successfully implemented strategies that may work well in other jurisdictions. Through our shared knowledge we can positively impact everyone in our profession.

3. What do you believe EMS practitioners from younger generations are seeking from membership in a professional association, and how can NAEMT best respond to their needs?

As a 20-year veteran of the EMS profession I have the unique vantage point of still being clinically engaged in the field while also teaching young paramedic students entering the profession. I have the unique opportunity to relate to them through the roles of a professor, mentor, guide, friend, and soon-to-be colleague. I have always been impressed by the values elevated by each generation and its impact on the profession. Not only does each bring their own strength but it's the nature of social dynamics to influence one another. This generation entering the field values a meaning above all. They seek meaning in their work and are not discouraged by any amount of hard work or effort so long as they are positioned to have a meaningful impact. They care less about money and more about matching their lifestyle to their values. As they achieve this it is often creative and nothing short of inspiring. They don't see barriers, only opportunities with pathways that have yet to reveal themselves. As leaders in the profession the best thing we can do is to give these folks a voice at the table and lots of space to try out their creative solutions. As with every new venture there will be failure, and it is our job to make a safe place for failure. But without failures there would be no fertile ground for successes.

4. Explain how you communicate the value of NAEMT membership to existing and potential members.

As a professional organization we are stronger together. The NAEMT provides a structure for everyone in our profession to work alongside others with similar passions. In this pursuit the NAEMT remains nimble and flexible to the needs of EMS by forming and reforming teams to focus on issues as they develop. Only through our combined efforts can we move the needle on issues impacting our profession. Only through our combined voice can those at the highest levels of government hear us clearly.