



2023 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

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

Candidate: __Maria Beermann-Foat_____

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.

I believe the attributes of integrity, vision, effective communication, adaptability, innovation, and empowerment are essential for effective leadership in any role. As a current board member and as a candidate for the West Director position, I strive to bring these leadership qualities to all that I'm involved in and to serve our organization effectively.

At the core of leadership is integrity. I firmly believe in transparency, honesty, and ethical behavior. Throughout my career, I have upheld the highest standards of integrity through ethical leadership. Ethical leadership is about managing and leading through conduct that is trustworthy and fair to all who are impacted by the leader. It's about being trustworthy so that when hard decisions must be made which may be unfavorable, others understand those decisions were not knee-jerk reactions and were made after careful deliberation and with the best of intentions.

In my short time on the board, I constantly remind myself that I'm there to speak and advocate for those who aren't present. EMS providers trust NAEMT to do the right thing on behalf of all EMS providers and not just a select few or from a specific segment of EMS. I prioritize our members' best interests, ensuring that every decision is in alignment with our values and ethical principles while promoting more inclusivity and innovation.

Effective leaders have a clear vision for the future and bring a forward-thinking perspective emphasizing long-term objectives and sustainable growth. My vision for our organization includes fostering innovation, promoting inclusivity, and striving for excellence in all our endeavors while balancing today's workforce environment stressors.

I believe open and effective communication is the cornerstone of successful leadership. By fostering an environment where all voices are heard, and decisions are based on a collective understanding of our challenges and opportunities, I work to build trust and collaboration within our organization. Often, doing this requires questioning the norm, resisting groupthink, and re-examining of what we're doing against what we're trying to achieve. I'm not afraid to have the hard conversations, because my goal is to get us where we need to be.

In today's rapidly evolving world, adaptability is crucial. I am committed to learning, evolving, and adjusting our strategies as necessary to navigate the ever-changing landscape. I stay informed about industry trends and best practices so that we are positioned optimally when we must pivot.

Leaders should inspire others to excel and empower them to take ownership of their roles. I work to cultivate a culture of innovation, creativity, and collaboration within our organization so that our members are enabled to reach their full potential. I try to motivate others with my dedication and enthusiasm for the amazing work this association does.

I believe I embody these key characteristics and am committed to NAEMT's continued success and growth. I'm enthusiastic about the opportunity to continue serving on the board and continue working on achieving our shared goals and objectives.

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?

Supporting the health, wellbeing, and resilience of EMS practitioners is essential, given the high-stress and unpredictable nature of our work. Over the past 5-10 years, we've made strong moves toward more and better access to mental health resources, peer support programs, CISM debriefings, promoting physical wellness and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices. While there's still more to be done in these areas, they are more commonplace than ever before.

Two of the primary roles NAEMT serves the EMS profession are that of providing education and advocating for policy changes at the national and local levels. This past year, we saw the finalization and implementation of the Mental Health Resilience Officer course (which has been well received by those who have taken the course) as a means for agencies to establish formalized roles for recognizing and supporting their personnel experiencing mental health stressors and crisis. The Lighthouse Leadership program was launched and provides direct 1-on-1 mentorship for developing leaders. Advocacy efforts have (and continue to) address EMS reimbursement, grant funding for rural agencies/providers, funding for our shrinking workforce, accreditation, and many more important items. All these items create a tangled web of complexity and make it difficult to find any quick solutions.

I believe there is strength in community and NAEMT's community recognizes the need for promoting work-life balance, ensuring access to adequate resources, and developing leadership training to equip

leaders with the emotional intelligence and critical thinking skills to lead optimally. NAEMT's many committees are actively involved in identifying best practices regarding workforce retention, increasing our community membership to help support each other, providing training opportunities on hot topics via webinars and social media, and ensuring we have representation on the various national associations and work groups making decisions that impact our profession. There's a great deal of work being done by an amazing group of volunteers.

Some ways I believe NAEMT can expand upon current efforts:

- Encourage agencies to develop work cultures that limit excessive overtime and ensure adequate time off between shifts.
- Encourage agencies to make physical fitness and healthy lifestyles a priority. This could be by finding ways to provide wellness programs or even ensuring employees can access nutritious meals during their shifts.
- Partner with local mental health resources to help provide training on mental health awareness, stress management, and coping strategies to the challenges specific to EMS.
- Develop support networks at the local level of NAEMT members to foster a greater sense of NAEMT community. They could organize activities and events to strengthen their bond and provide emotional support beyond the confines of their own agency.
- Promote sleep hygiene best practices and assist agencies in developing environments that provide the greatest opportunity for rest.
- Conduct regular wellbeing assessments or surveys of the workforce to gauge the overall health and satisfaction of our workforce. NAEMT could develop a real-time heatmap of areas where the workforce is nearing or in crisis so that we recognize they need greater support.

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?

EMS practitioners from Generation Z and the upcoming generation (Alpha) have unique expectations due to their upbringing in a world filled with technology. They expect seamless digital experiences, want easy access to resources, networking opportunities, and information via online platforms and social media. To effectively cater to their needs, I believe NAEMT should ensure user-friendly websites and mobile apps, offer more on-demand resources, webinars, and forums for discussion. NAEMT has an active social media presence (which can engage these members and facilitate networking) but as social media changes, NAEMT will need to recognize how to change with it.

With so much information available to them, the younger generations are adapted to being in a constant state of learning and development. They are more well informed, and at a faster rate, than prior generations. However, due to the rapid nature of social media, their attention spans are shorter, and they seem to desire short "bursts" of information. NAEMT could consider developing more

microlearning options or virtual workshops to fulfill their need for continuous learning and skill development while keeping time constrained.

The younger generation is more diverse and prioritize inclusivity to a greater degree therefore would likely value an association that promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging. NAEMT could organize events that actively seek input from diverse voices and encourage that work committees and leadership groups reflect a diverse composition.

As the mother of a gen Z'er, I've come to realize just how socially conscious they are and how much they advocate for positive environmental change. I didn't know what zero-scaping was until my youngest daughter educated me on the environmental impact of trying to maintain a green lawn. They are intimately aware of carbon-footprints, natural resource depletion, and effects on weather systems. NAEMT could ensure that its business practices align with sustainability efforts and show how the association is working with EMS agencies to do the same.

Lastly, this generation values work-life balance to a greater degree and are more apt to change employers or leave the EMS profession all together when they feel work-life has become unbalanced. They are known to prefer spending their time off doing anything that does not entail going to work. Therefore, NAEMT should continue seeking workforce solutions that promote greater work-life balance and encourage EMS agencies to rethink traditional extended shifts. While many EMS providers are known to prefer longer shifts, those in busier systems often require spending parts of their days off work trying to catch up on sleep/rest. The younger generation seems to value spending their off time on perceived quality of life activities (e.g., hobbies, traveling, socializing, etc.) instead of recuperating from a busy shift.

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

The perceived value of NAEMT membership really depends on the individual, therefore I try to understand what goals, values, or desires someone has as part of the EMS community. Often, individuals first become acquainted with NAEMT when they participate in one of our many courses. However, they aren't usually aware that NAEMT offers more than education.

I like asking questions, so I will usually ask something to the effect of, "as an EMS provider, what would you change about EMS?" This will frequently get responses pertaining to low pay, inadequate benefits, morale issues, or poor leadership, to name a few. I truly enjoy these types of responses because every one of them can be directly tied to a committee, work group, project, or initiative that NAEMT is actively involved in and working to address.

I point out how rather remarkable this association is in doing as much as it does in as many venues as possible. Depending on the value item of most priority for the individual, I discuss what NAEMT offers for their stated value item. For example, if someone says they wish EMS providers were paid higher

wages, I discuss how the advocacy committee works all year to stay abreast of legislation and spearheads EMS Week on the Hill to get our voices heard concerning CMS reimbursement. If someone says they don't know how to grow professionally or are lacking development opportunities, I describe the various committees that provide this exact type of experience through their project work and networking and collaboration with external agencies and associations.

Lastly, I state the obvious. The price of NAEMT membership is incredibly low in comparison to what a member gets in return. The number of product discounts alone recoups the membership fee, including a significant discount to the EMS World conference, but the opportunity to work side-by-side with our profession's leaders from across the country is priceless.