



Greg Cox

Position Sought: South Central Region Director

Candidate Q&A

1. How would you describe your leadership style, and how has it influenced your work in EMS?

I would describe my leadership style as one built on trust, empowerment, and accountability. Throughout my career in EMS, I have been fortunate to learn from several outstanding mentors, each of whom influenced how I view leadership. One lesson that has remained with me is that when you surround yourself with passionate, capable people, provide them with the tools and resources they need to succeed, and then empower them to do what they do best, extraordinary things can happen.

I believe effective leadership is less about having all the answers and more about creating an environment where others can succeed. I strive to give people the autonomy to make decisions, take ownership of their responsibilities, and contribute meaningfully to the mission. At the same time, empowerment must be accompanied by accountability. People need to understand not only what is expected of them, but also why their role matters to the larger organization and the people we serve.

This philosophy has shaped my approach throughout my EMS career, from the fire service to EMS education and program leadership. I have consistently tried to develop people rather than simply manage tasks. When individuals are trusted and given ownership, they become stakeholders in the success of the organization rather than simply employees completing assignments.

In EMS, where the quality of our work can directly affect someone's life, I believe this approach is particularly important. Strong teams are built on competence, trust, communication, and a shared commitment to the mission. My responsibility as a leader is to establish that vision, remove barriers, provide the resources and support necessary to accomplish it, and then allow capable people to lead within their areas of expertise.

Ultimately, my leadership philosophy is simple: hire or develop good people, give them the tools to succeed, trust them to do their jobs, and hold them accountable for the outcome. I have found that when people know they are trusted, valued, and part of something larger than themselves, they consistently rise to the occasion.

2. In what ways do you advocate for EMS? What strategies would you recommend for NAEMT to strengthen its advocacy efforts and gain recognition for EMS as an essential service?

I advocate for EMS in both my professional role as an educator and through my daily interactions with the providers, students, and communities I serve. From my unique position in EMS education, I have the opportunity to shape the next generation of providers and instill in them a sense of pride in the profession and the important role they play in their communities. I continually share advice that was given to me as a brand-new paramedic working in a busy suburban department: "Fall in love with EMS, and you will have a long, happy career." That philosophy has stayed with me throughout my career and remains something I try to pass on to others.

I believe one of the most important ways we advocate for EMS is by demonstrating our value. As the scope of practice for both EMTs and paramedics continues to expand, so does our ability to positively impact the health and well-being of our communities. EMS is no longer limited to emergency transportation; we are increasingly involved in community paramedicine, public health, behavioral health, critical care, tactical medicine, and other specialized areas. We must ensure that policymakers and the public understand the breadth and value of what EMS professionals provide.

I believe NAEMT can strengthen its advocacy efforts by continuing to promote these expanded roles while developing a stronger, unified national voice for EMS as an essential component of the healthcare system. This includes providing members with effective advocacy tools, increasing public awareness of the profession, and developing partnerships with healthcare organizations, public safety agencies, and policymakers. We should also tell the stories of the patients and communities impacted by EMS, because those stories help translate statistics and policy discussions into the human value of our profession.

NAEMT's commitment to education and specialty training is another important advocacy tool. As the scope of EMS continues to evolve, educational opportunities in areas such as tactical medicine, critical care, community paramedicine, and other emerging specialties should continue to expand. Developing highly skilled providers strengthens our profession from within while demonstrating to the healthcare system and the public that EMS is an essential, highly trained healthcare profession.

3. How can NAEMT better support and develop the EMS workforce, considering generational differences? How would you convey the value of membership to both current and prospective members?

NAEMT has an important role to play in developing an EMS workforce that understands not only what we do, but why we do it. Generational differences are real, but I believe the common thread across generations is the desire to understand the purpose behind our work and to have opportunities to grow professionally.

Today's providers are entering a profession that looks very different from the EMS of previous generations. As our scope expands into behavioral and mental health response, community paramedicine, home-based care, tactical medicine, critical care, and other non-traditional roles, we must help providers understand why EMS is moving in these directions and how these changes strengthen our role within the healthcare system.

NAEMT is uniquely positioned to lead that effort. As an organization that understands the evolving scope of EMS, NAEMT should continue developing education and professional-development opportunities in emerging areas of practice while helping providers build the confidence and competence necessary to succeed in them. We should also use technology and contemporary educational methods to make those opportunities accessible to a workforce with different learning preferences, career experiences, and expectations.

I would convey the value of NAEMT membership by emphasizing that membership is an investment in both the individual provider and the future of the profession. Members gain access to education, professional development, networking, and a collective voice advocating for EMS. More importantly, membership helps NAEMT develop the educational resources and professional initiatives necessary to prepare EMS providers for where the profession is going, not simply where it has been.

If we want to retain experienced providers while attracting and developing the next generation, we must give them a reason to remain engaged. That means demonstrating that EMS offers a career of lifelong learning, professional growth, and meaningful service. NAEMT can help create that pathway.

Ultimately, I believe the best way to build the EMS workforce is to help providers see a future for themselves within the profession. If we can give them the education, resources, and opportunities to grow, while helping them understand the expanding value of EMS, we will not only strengthen our workforce, but we will also strengthen EMS as a profession.

4. What is a pressing issue currently facing EMS, and how could NAEMT help address it?

The most pressing issue I see facing EMS today is the need for earlier, more accessible mental health support for our providers. We are losing too many experienced clinicians to burnout, suicide, and other mental health challenges. When we lose those seasoned providers, we lose more than personnel; we lose decades of experience, institutional knowledge, and mentorship that are essential to developing the next generation of EMS professionals.

As a new generation of providers enters the workforce, they need to know that their profession and their organizations are committed to supporting them as whole people, not simply as clinicians. EMS providers routinely encounter traumatic and emotionally difficult situations, and we must normalize seeking help before a crisis occurs. Asking for help should be viewed as a sign of self-awareness and strength, not weakness.

NAEMT is uniquely positioned to help address this issue through education, advocacy, and leadership development. Advocacy begins at the top. Leaders at every level of EMS need education on recognizing the signs of burnout and mental health challenges, understanding the resources available to their personnel, and creating organizational cultures where seeking assistance is encouraged rather than stigmatized. NAEMT can help establish best practices and provide leaders with practical tools they can take back to their agencies and organizations.

I also believe mental health support must extend beyond the workplace. Our providers do not leave their experiences at the station when they go home. The cumulative effects of an EMS career can affect marriages, families, relationships, and overall quality of life. Providing early access to appropriate support can help providers cope more effectively, preserve relationships, and ultimately extend their careers.

NAEMT should continue to advocate for accessible, affordable, and confidential mental health resources while supporting research into effective strategies for EMS providers. We need to understand not only how to respond when a provider reaches a crisis, but how to build resilience and provide support throughout an entire career.

Ultimately, supporting the mental health of EMS providers is an investment in the future of our profession. If we want to retain experienced clinicians, develop the next generation, strengthen mentorship, and build a sustainable EMS workforce, we must make mental health support an integral part of EMS, not an afterthought.