



Rommie Duckworth

Position Sought: Northeast Region Director

Statement of Candidacy

EMS has spent a decade treating its workforce crisis as a recruiting problem. We hire, we lose people, we hire again. The pattern holds because the deficit underneath it is a leadership deficit. Compensation is an issue, but clinicians don't just leave us over pay. They leave supervisors who were never prepared to supervise, agencies with no visible path forward, and organizations that postpone succession planning until it becomes the next emergency. Compensation reform is necessary, and NAEMT must keep driving it. It is not sufficient. No policy win survives contact with an agency that cannot develop and keep its own leaders.

I am seeking re-election because that gap is closable and the work is unfinished. As Chair of the Lighthouse Leadership Program, I helped turn James O. Page's vision into functioning national infrastructure: a no-cost, mentor-driven, 18-month program in which every mentee must produce a tangible deliverable that advances EMS beyond their own agency. As NAEMT's representative to the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma, I have worked to move national trauma guidance into field practice, contributing to updated guidance on traumatic out-of-hospital circulatory arrest and to the 2024 joint position statement on prehospital antibiotics for suspected open fractures. Both efforts answer the same question: how does a national association produce something a working EMS agency can actually use on Monday?

The challenges are familiar. Reimbursement remains misaligned with the care we deliver. The workforce is thin and tired. Continued-competency expectations are shifting faster than most agencies can absorb, and the Northeast's small, rural, and volunteer-dependent services slowest of all. The opportunity is that the structural variety of EMS, so often a barrier to a unified voice, is also a national testbed. NAEMT is the one organization positioned to find what works in one system and make it adoptable in another.

NAEMT should meet this by holding advocacy and education to a product standard: model policies, adoption-ready toolkits, competency frameworks, and mentored leaders who carry them home. Position statements matter, but members judge us by what they can put to work, which is also the clearest answer to what dues buy.

If elected, my goals are to: scale Lighthouse from a cohort program into a durable leadership pipeline with published deliverables and tracked graduate outcomes; strengthen the path from national clinical guidance to Northeast field practice through my ACS COT work; deepen engagement with Northeast state and regional EMS associations, whose systems are underrepresented in national conversations; and report back to members plainly on what moved and what did not.

I am the best candidate for this seat because I do this work in both directions at once. I am a sitting fire chief accountable for a combination fire/EMS system, a licensed paramedic and active instructor, clinician, and a national volunteer. My commitment is unchanged: listen first, focus, follow through, and follow up.