



Andrew Kettle

Position Sought: Northeast 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 collaborative, people-focused, and mission-driven. I believe our people are the foundation of everything we accomplish. Without a committed and supported team, an EMS organization cannot fulfill its mission. At the same time, we exist to serve our communities and must remain accountable to the residents and the elected and appointed leaders who place their trust in us.

Throughout my tenure as Chief of Charlestown Ambulance-Rescue Service, I have prioritized building partnerships and relationships. I have worked to strengthen relationships within our organization, with municipal leaders, neighboring EMS and public-safety agencies, healthcare organizations, educators, state officials, and community partners. These relationships have helped us secure resources, expand educational opportunities, improve our clinical capabilities, develop our workforce, and introduce programs that better meet our community's needs.

I also believe the people closest to the work often have the clearest understanding of what is needed. I encourage team members to share ideas, take ownership of projects, and contribute to the organization's direction. My responsibility as a leader is to establish expectations, provide support and resources, and create opportunities for others to succeed. It also means being accountable, communicating honestly, and making difficult decisions when necessary.

More than 25 years in EMS has taught me that leadership is built on trust. Trust is earned by listening, following through, being present, and giving people credit for their contributions. This approach has helped us move our organization forward while staying focused on the mission that brings us together: providing high-quality care and service to our community.

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?

Advocacy is one of the most important ways we can serve our profession. I currently serve as Rhode Island's NAEMT Advocacy Coordinator, and I have participated in EMS On The Hill Day for the past five years. I also frequently visit the Rhode Island State House or meet with local, state, and federal officials to discuss the needs of EMS professionals, agencies, and the patients we serve.

This work has produced meaningful results. By working together with EMS leaders, elected officials, and other partners, we have more than doubled Rhode Island's Medicaid reimbursement rates for ambulance services. We have also brought Mobile Integrated Healthcare and Treatment in Place to the forefront of legislative conversations. These efforts demonstrate what is possible when EMS presents a unified message, supports it with data, and maintains relationships with policymakers throughout the year.

Having participated in NAEMT's flagship advocacy program, I believe the association already makes a strong effort to represent EMS nationally. The Online Legislative Service is another valuable and easy-to-use tool that allows EMS professionals to communicate directly with their elected officials. The challenge is connecting with more EMS professionals and helping them understand that our profession's continued growth depends on their participation in advocacy.

NAEMT should continue expanding its grassroots network by giving members clear information, practical talking points, and specific actions they can take in their own communities. Advocacy must feel accessible to the EMT or paramedic who may never travel to Washington but can meet with a local official, testify at a state hearing, or invite community leaders to visit their agency.

Grassroots advocacy is also one of our best opportunities to gain recognition for EMS as an essential service. In my community, we used data presentations, public workshops, and direct engagement with residents and local leaders to demonstrate the value and needs of EMS. That effort ultimately helped build support for a charter revision recognizing EMS as an essential service. NAEMT can help members replicate this approach by providing data, educational materials, and practical guidance for building support within their own communities.

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?

In my experience, great people enter EMS every year, but many leave within a few years for other healthcare professions that offer better compensation, clearer opportunities for advancement, and a healthier work-life balance. We cannot keep building our workforce on the expectation that providers will work excessive overtime just to make ends meet. Today's EMS professionals want meaningful work, but they also expect the opportunity to build a sustainable career and maintain a life outside of work. Those are reasonable expectations our profession must address.

NAEMT can support the workforce by continuing to provide engaging educational and training programs while advocating for the reimbursement and funding necessary to pay EMS professionals what they are worth. Workforce development must include leadership education, mentorship, career pathways, and opportunities for professional growth. It must also recognize the many volunteer EMS agencies struggling to recruit and retain members because people's employment and family commitments leave less time to volunteer.

NAEMT is uniquely positioned to provide resources that help agencies adapt to these changes while advocating for solutions at the state and federal levels. This includes helping leaders understand generational differences without allowing those differences to divide the workforce. Each generation brings valuable experience, ideas, and perspectives to EMS. Our goal should be to create an environment where those strengths complement one another.

At \$40 per year, the educational and professional discounts available to members can easily offset the cost of membership. More importantly, membership adds each EMS professional's voice to a national organization advocating for our profession. Through NAEMT's resources and guidance, members across the country can speak a common language about the challenges facing EMS and the solutions we need.

A unified, data-driven voice gives EMS greater credibility with legislators, regulators, healthcare partners, and the public. Collective advocacy will move our profession forward, improve working conditions, strengthen recruitment and retention, and ensure EMS professionals receive the recognition and support they deserve.

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

Financial sustainability is one of the most pressing issues facing EMS today. Across the country, ambulance services are struggling with rising personnel, equipment, training, and operating costs while reimbursement continues to fall short of the actual cost of maintaining a prepared EMS system. I frequently read in professional journals and online forums about services reducing coverage or closing because they can no longer afford to operate. When an EMS agency closes, the consequences extend beyond that organization. Response times increase, neighboring services absorb additional calls, and communities lose access to timely emergency care.

NAEMT is already helping address this issue through advocacy for reimbursement legislation and support for the Ground Ambulance Data Collection System. Accurate national data is essential to demonstrating that current reimbursement rates do not adequately cover the cost of readiness, response, treatment, and transportation. Without reliable data, it is difficult to show legislators and payors the full financial burden of operating an EMS service around the clock.

NAEMT's size, national reach, and administrative capabilities allow it to help interpret this national data and turn it into practical resources that individual agencies can use in their own advocacy. The association can then turn that information into practical resources that EMS leaders can use when speaking with municipal officials, state legislators, members of Congress, regulators, and insurance companies.

These conversations will not always be easy, but they are necessary. EMS leaders must explain what it costs to provide their services, why existing reimbursement models are inadequate, and what will happen if systems continue to operate without sustainable funding.

NAEMT can help by combining strong national advocacy with reliable data and tools that support local and state efforts. A unified, data-driven approach will give EMS the credibility needed to secure appropriate reimbursement, protect access to care, and ensure that agencies have the resources they need to survive.