



Macara Trusty

Position Sought: Treasurer

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 transformational and servant focused. I've never believed leadership is about having all the answers. It's about bringing the right people together, listening, removing barriers, and helping succeed, then trusting them enough to let them lead.

Throughout my EMS career, I've been passionate about developing people and building teams and organizations where team members can grow and thrive. I believe leadership is the ability to inspire and positively influence people to accomplish shared goals. A big part of that is treating others the way you would want to be treated and investing in their growth and development. I also believe you can care deeply about people while still holding high standards and creating accountability. In fact, I think the best leaders do both.

For more than 32 years, my career has been centered on caring for people. Early on, that meant caring for patients at the bedside. As my leadership responsibilities grew, it also meant caring for the frontline employees and leaders who make exceptional patient care possible every day. That perspective has shaped how I lead and reinforced my belief that investing in people is one of the most important ways we can strengthen our organizations and our profession.

The part of my career I'm most proud of isn't a project or initiative, it's the leaders I've had the opportunity to mentor and develop along the way. Seeing people gain confidence, take on bigger challenges, and grow into leadership roles is incredibly rewarding. It has reinforced my belief that when we invest in people and create opportunities for growth, we strengthen not only individuals but EMS as a whole.

EMS faces complex challenges, and I believe our greatest and most important asset is our people. That belief has guided my work in operations, leadership development, workforce engagement, and strategic planning. My goal has always been simple: make things better than I found them and help others do the same.

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 a variety of ways, but most of them come back to the same belief: if we want a stronger profession, we must invest in our people.

For more than 32 years, my career has been centered on caring for people. Early on, that meant caring for patients. As my responsibilities grew, it also meant supporting the frontline employees and leaders who make exceptional patient care possible every day. That perspective has shaped how I advocate for EMS and continues to drive my passion for workforce development, leadership development, education, and professional engagement.

Throughout my career, I have advocated for EMS at the local, state, and national levels through education, workforce initiatives, leadership development, and legislative engagement. I have participated in multiple EMS on the Hill Day events and have contributed to EMS advancement efforts through the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) in Texas. I have served on the GETAC EMS Education Committee for more than ten years, including eight years as committee chair, where I have had the opportunity to help support EMS education and professional development across our state.

Through my work with NAEMT, I was fortunate to help establish the Lighthouse Leadership Program and continue to serve on that committee today. Leadership development has long been a passion of mine because strong leaders help create strong organizations and stronger communities. I also serve on the EMS Workforce Committee, where we focus on challenges impacting recruitment, retention, employee engagement, and the long-term sustainability of our workforce.

Advocacy is not limited to legislative efforts. I believe advocacy also includes mentoring future leaders, sharing knowledge, supporting professional development, and helping others understand the essential role EMS plays within the healthcare system. As one of the Texas NAEMT State Education Coordinators, I have the opportunity to connect EMS professionals with educational resources and learning opportunities. I also regularly speak at state and national conferences, as well as webinars, on workforce and retention challenges facing our profession.

As healthcare continues to evolve, I believe EMS must continue telling its story with a unified voice. We have made tremendous progress, but there is still work to do in achieving recognition as an essential service. To strengthen advocacy efforts, I believe NAEMT should continue building relationships with legislators, healthcare organizations, and community partners while equipping members with the tools and confidence to advocate effectively in their own communities. Data is important, but stories matter too. We need to continue sharing the impact EMS has on patients, communities, and the healthcare system as a whole.

I also believe we must continue advocating for EMS as a profession, not simply an occupation. Recruitment, retention, reimbursement, workforce sustainability, clinician well-being, and leadership development are all advocacy issues. When we invest in our people, we strengthen the future of EMS itself.

Ultimately, advocacy is about ensuring EMS professionals are heard, valued, supported, and recognized for the essential role they play in healthcare every day.

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?

I believe NAEMT has a tremendous opportunity to support the EMS workforce by focusing on what matters most across every generation: people want to feel valued, supported, connected to a purpose, and given opportunities to grow.

Through my work facilitating Frontline Leadership Academies for my organization and presenting on workforce understanding and retention challenges, I've learned that generational differences are often influenced by the cultural, economic, and societal experiences that shape how people view work.

The lessons people learn from watching their parents and grandparents in the workforce, along with the events occurring during their formative years, often influence their expectations of leadership, communication, career growth, and work-life integration. While those perspectives may differ, most people want the same things: meaningful work, opportunities for growth, leaders they trust, and a sense of belonging.

One of the greatest challenges facing EMS today is workforce sustainability. Through my work on the NAEMT EMS Workforce Committee, I've had the opportunity to participate in discussions focused on recruitment, retention, career development, and creating a stronger future for our profession. Those conversations have reinforced my belief that people are more likely to remain committed to EMS when they can see opportunities to learn, grow, and build meaningful careers.

I believe NAEMT can continue strengthening the workforce through leadership development, mentorship, education, and professional engagement opportunities. I was fortunate to help establish the Lighthouse Leadership Program and continue to serve on the committee today. Programs like Lighthouse create opportunities for experienced and emerging leaders to learn from one another while developing the next generation of EMS leadership.

When it comes to membership, I don't believe NAEMT needs a different value proposition for every generation. The value proposition remains the same, but the way we engage members may need to evolve to meet them where they are. Newer EMS professionals may be looking for mentorship, networking, and career guidance. Mid-career professionals often seek opportunities to expand their influence and develop new skills. More experienced professionals may be motivated by teaching, mentoring, committee service, and giving back to the profession.

For current members, I would emphasize that their voice matters and that NAEMT provides opportunities to contribute, lead, and help shape the future of EMS. For prospective members, I would focus on the opportunity to learn, grow, connect, and become part of a professional community that is actively advancing our profession.

Ultimately, I believe the greatest value of NAEMT is not found in any single program or benefit. It is found in the people it brings together and the collective impact those individuals have on the future of EMS.

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

I believe one of the most pressing issues facing EMS is workforce sustainability. However, workforce sustainability is not a singular problem. It is affected by many interconnected factors, including inadequate funding and reimbursement, low compensation, leadership effectiveness, workplace culture, employee well-being, professional development, and whether people can envision a meaningful, long-term career in EMS.

We are already addressing many of these individual contributors, but no single program or policy will solve the larger challenge. Funding affects an organization's ability to offer competitive wages, benefits, equipment, education, and adequate staffing. Culture affects whether employees feel valued, supported, heard, and willing to stay. Even increased funding will not solve retention problems if employees work in an unhealthy culture, and culture improvements alone cannot overcome a financial model that does not adequately support the cost of providing EMS.

NAEMT can help by continuing to advocate for sustainable reimbursement, federal workforce funding, recognition of EMS as an essential service, and payment models that reflect the care EMS provides, not simply whether a patient is transported. Current NAEMT priorities already include advocating for funding, training, equipment, workforce support, and reimbursement for services such as treatment in place. NAEMT also provides EMS agencies with information about federal funding opportunities, which is a practical resource that can help organizations identify potential support.

Advocacy should also include equipping members to tell the EMS workforce story locally. NAEMT could give members concise data, talking points, sample presentations, and real workforce stories they can use with legislators, community leaders, healthcare partners, and payers. National advocacy is critical,

but meaningful change also happens when local decision-makers understand what it actually costs to build and sustain a healthy EMS workforce.

Culture must be addressed just as intentionally. Through leadership education, mentorship, practical toolkits, and shared best practices, NAEMT can help agencies strengthen frontline leadership, psychological safety, communication, recognition, accountability, and employee development. My own program concepts have emphasized practical resources for workforce engagement, leadership growth, well-being, work-life integration, and healthier organizational cultures.

Ultimately, workforce sustainability will require coordinated action by EMS professionals, employers, educators, associations, payers, and policymakers. NAEMT cannot solve every contributor alone, but it can bring the right people together, advocate for systemic change, and give EMS leaders practical tools to improve the areas they can influence. We must address the financial realities of EMS while also creating organizations where people want to stay, grow, and build meaningful careers.