



2024 Questions to NAEMT Board Candidates

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

Candidate: Justin Arnone

Questions for 2024 Election Candidates

1. Please describe your leadership style.

When I was 19 years old, I went to the Senior NCO at my National Guard Unit and asked him what I needed to do to get promoted to Sergeant. He asked me, "Why do you want to be promoted?" I had no answer other than that I wanted to get promoted and become a Sergeant. At the time I just wanted the status. He explained to me that the purpose of being an NCO is to take care of Soldiers. Any other reason that didn't include that concept was not a good reason to be a leader. When he used the word "leader", it changed my outlook on promotion.

From that day forward, I assumed a servant leadership mentality. I was born with a servant's heart, and I knew that was the type of leader I wanted to be. Servant Leadership was my foundation, and I grew into that concept throughout my career. As the Chief of EMS at my department, I work for my employees. My goal is to support and provide for them to help them succeed in their roles. I strive to help and motivate them in their quest for personal and professional growth. If we invest in them and they leave, that is okay. I want them to be set up for success no matter where they are in life. Professionally or personally. I aim to invest in them and create the best work environment and culture possible where they want to stay and work for our organization.

I am open and honest, and I show humility and vulnerability when needed to let my employees know that it's okay not to know everything and to make mistakes. I try to set a good example of what to do in those situations. That is to continue making the best decisions I can, knowing that failure is a part of success.

I foster a “Just Culture” environment where my employees don’t fear discipline or adverse action for reporting errors, mistakes, or problems when disciplinary action is unnecessary. I value their input and try to empower them to be a part of building and improving our system. I take ownership of the system and processes that are the organization's and its leadership's responsibility, and I hold my employees accountable for what they are responsible for. This helps them grow professionally and learn how to navigate and overcome challenges.

Overall, I believe serving my employees, providing them with open communication opportunities, supporting them, empowering them to take ownership of their work, and fighting for them when needed are characteristics of my leadership style that I am proud of.

2. How do you advocate on behalf of EMS in your local area or state? How would you recommend NAEMT strengthen its grassroots advocacy efforts and increase involvement by EMS practitioners?

Over the course of my career, I have advocated for EMS at all levels, including Local, Regional, State, and National Levels. I have advocated on behalf of civilian EMS, Army Combat Medics, and other military medical specialties. I have been a part of Task Forces and Committees, where I have provided subject matter expertise, contributed to discussions, wrote articles, and met with political figures to discuss ongoing issues faced by EMS professionals and military medical personnel. I serve or have served as the State Education Coordinator for Louisiana, on the Louisiana EMS Taskforce, and on the NAEMT Education Committee, as well as others. Whether I serve in an official capacity or not, I will always be vocal about the issues faced by our profession. I will maintain awareness of current events and contribute in whatever way necessary to ensure the voice of the EMS profession is heard.

To strengthen its grassroots advocacy efforts and increase involvement by EMS practitioners, it is important to let them know that their voices are heard. When someone knows their voice is heard, they are more willing to speak up and contribute. An approach to this may be for NAEMT to support State Education and Advocacy Coordinators by setting up State-Wide “Town Hall” type meetings. Preferably, these meetings can be in person, but online meetings may also be a viable option. By hearing from EMS Practitioners around the different states, the NAEMT can better understand local and national needs. Maybe the NAEMT can even offer a voucher for an NAEMT course to participate in one of these events.

3. EMS continuing education is moving in a continued competency direction. What are your thoughts on how NAEMT education can best meet the competency needs of practitioners in the field?

I have a saying that I use all the time. It says, “You’re doing a lot, but what are you actually accomplishing?”. Personally, I believe competency-based education (not tied to a specific hourly requirement) is necessary to ensure our EMS providers are capable and competent and are meeting the needs of our patients. Too often, EMS providers go to a “refresher” course to get their hours and walk away without learning what they need. What’s the point of checking the box to get hours if knowledge isn’t gained and skills aren’t developed? This is doing a lot but accomplishing nothing or very little.

The NAEMT does a great job providing courses covering the foundational material EMS Providers need. Moving forward, I believe competency-based evaluations can be performed, and individualized training plans can be generated based on the results of those evaluations. We are seeing more and more education being tailored using those methods. One way the NAEMT could accomplish this is to develop standardized evaluations for all levels of providers. Based on the results of those evaluations, a learning plan can be created that covers the topics from PHTLS, AMLS, GEMS, EPC, EMS-Safety, PTEP, EVOC, etc., that the individual did not demonstrate competency in. Once a provider demonstrates competency in that material, they could be recognized as meeting the National requirements for recertification at their level. From there, the different Regions, States, or Local agencies could follow the same process to ensure competency in topics related to the needs of their specific areas.

Personally, I feel that this is a viable option. It allows providers who demonstrate competency early on to save training time and use that time to cover more in-depth content, pursue specialty certifications, or do anything else that contributes to their own growth.

4. What is a pressing hot topic in EMS and why is it important to you? How might NAEMT address it?

There are so many pressing topics in EMS right now. From being recognized as an essential service to workforce shortages, the need for mental health support programs, obtaining appropriate funding and reimbursements, and educational needs, the list of significant issues seems daunting at times. I have a great deal of faith in the current leadership of the NAEMT, and I know that all these issues will continue to be faced head-on without letting up until viable solutions are implemented.

As a service member, there is one issue that I am closely involved with that is important to me. That is transitioning military medical professionals into the civilian workforce who hold (or should hold) an EMS provider certification. Currently, many highly trained military medical personnel get out of the service and either don't have civilian certification or credentialing that directly relates to their knowledge base, or they face other challenges transitioning into the civilian workforce.

The NAEMT is already addressing these issues through the Military Relations Council. Recently, I was invited to discuss my potential service on that council. If given the ability to serve in that capacity, I would support one of the NAEMT's goals, which is to support and assist service members.

I will advocate for transitioning service members by coordinating with our military partners to ensure that service members are encouraged or required to maintain civilian certifications to make the transition process easier. I will advocate that we continue to provide and enhance the support and resources we give to service members who transition out of the military and want to enter the EMS profession. Finally, I will advocate to ensure that further educational opportunities are affordable and accessible to service members to further their knowledge and advance their EMS Careers.